

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT
AND THE
COMING OF THE WAR
1941

A STUDY IN APPEARANCES
AND REALITIES

By
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1932-1940

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PREFATORY NOTE

This volume is a sequel to my *American Foreign Policy in the Making, 1932-1940* (Yale University Press, 1946), to which reference is made in the following pages as Beard, *op. cit.*

Since a considerable part of this sequel is based upon the documentation provided by the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack of the Congress of the United States, I have used for convenience abbreviations of my citations of that authority. CJC, *Report* refers to the Joint Committee's unnumbered volume which embraces the views of the majority, the additional views of Mr. Keefe, and the minority views of Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Brewster (see Chap. XII). The volumes of the Joint Committee containing the hearings are numbered Parts 1-11 and the Exhibits, Parts 12-39. The reference to "CJC, Part—" is to the volume indicated by the number that follows. In a few cases references are made to mimeographs of documents presented to the committee and the public before the series was formally published; for example, extracts from Secretary Stimson's *Diary* and his supplementary statement. Several papers placed in the committee's hands were not included in its published volumes and so I have occasionally referred to its unpublished materials. The transcripts of the committee's hearings and documents, unprinted as well as printed, have been transferred to the National Archives where they may be examined by citizens in quest of the complete record.

To Miss Ella Holliday, of the Yale Press, I am deeply indebted for her skill and invincible patience in connection with the printing and binding of this manuscript.

Charles A. Beard

New Milford, Connecticut,
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PART I
APPEARANCES

CHAPTER I

Moral Commitments for the Conduct of Foreign Affairs in 1941

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT entered the year 1941 carrying moral responsibility for his covenants with the American people to keep this nation out of war—so to conduct foreign affairs as to avoid war. Those covenants, made the election campaign of 1940, were of two kinds. The first were the pledges of the Democratic party to which he publicly subscribed while he was bidding for the suffrages of the people. The second were his personal promises to the people, supplementing the obligations of his party's platform. The antiwar covenants of the Democratic party, to which President Roosevelt had committed himself unreservedly during the campaign, were clear-cut: "We will not participate in foreign wars, and we will not send our Army, naval, or air forces to fight in foreign lands outside of the Americas, except in case of attack. . . . The direction and aim of our foreign policy has been, and will continue to be, the security and defense of our own land and the maintenance of its peace."

In supplementing the pledges of the Democratic platform, President Roosevelt had also been unequivocal in his personal declarations. At Philadelphia, October 23, 1940, he had branded as false a Republican charge that "this Administration wishes to lead this country into war," and proclaimed that he was "following the road to peace." At Boston on October 30, he was even more emphatic, for there he declared: "I have said this before, but I shall say it again and again and again: Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars. . . . The purpose of our defense is defense." At Buffalo, Novem-

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ber 2, his vow was short and unqualified: "Your President says this country is not going to war."

It is true that the Democratic platform of 1940 pledged to liberty-loving peoples wantonly attacked "all the material aid at our command, consistent with law and not inconsistent with the interests of our own national self-defense." It is true also that during the campaign President Roosevelt reiterated, reinforced, and enlarged upon this promise. But neither Democratic party leaders nor President Roosevelt at the time construed the pledge to extend, conditionally, material aid to liberty-loving peoples as canceling the conditions and their antiwar covenants. And indeed it would require more than casuistry to show that an indefinite and conditional pledge in fact obliterated *ex vi termini* definite and unequivocal pledges to the contrary made simultaneously and subsequently.²

On their part, the Republicans and their candidate, Wendell Willkie, likewise committed themselves to definite promises that they would keep the United States out of war. The antiwar plank of the Republican platform read: "The Republican party is firmly opposed to involving this nation in foreign war." While expressing a real fear that the Administration was heading for war, Mr. Willkie reiterated again and again and again during the campaign a solemn promise that if elected President no American boys would be sent to fight in any European or Asiatic war.³

Whatever secret reservations President Roosevelt and Mr. Willkie may have cherished when they made their antiwar commitments to the American people, there can be no doubt

2. Even the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies did not claim in 1940 or until late in 1941 that the promise of such aid authorized the President to take the country into war in seeking to extend aid to liberty-loving peoples wantonly attacked. Walter Johnson, *The Battle against Isolation* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1944). Moreover, nothing said by President Roosevelt or sponsors of the measure authorizing this aid, namely, the Lend-Lease Act, while it was pending, lent the slightest countenance to the claim that lend-lease canceled all antiwar pledges and empowered the President to wage war in executing the law that provided for the extension of the aid. See below, Chap. 11.

3. For Mr. Willkie's antiwar speeches during the campaign of 1940, see Beard, *op. cit.*, pp. 296 ff. For statements on limited aid to the Allies in the Republican platform and Mr. Willkie's speeches see *ibid.* pp. 295 ff.

about the unequivocal nature of their covenants to keep the country out of war if victorious at the polls.⁴ Nor could there be any doubt that the overwhelming majority of the American people were then convinced that the United States should stay out of war in Europe and Asia. That conviction had long been maturing, in a large measure as the result of experiences during and after World War I.

As leader of "the great crusade" in 1917-18, President Wilson had held up before the American people a noble dream of a new and better world. In moving speeches and summary statements, he had told them that they were fighting a war for democracy, a war to end wars, a war to crush German military despotism, a war to close the old era of secret diplomacy and imperialism, a war to establish permanent peace among the war-weary peoples of the earth. But the war had scarcely come to a close when stark events began to dissolve the dream. Even in the so-called settlement at Versailles only two or three of President Wilson's Fourteen Points for an ideal peace were realized. For the American people the years that followed were years of deepening disillusionment.⁵

With regard to foreign policy, no trend in American public opinion between 1919 and 1941 was more marked than a diminishing confidence in the peace promises of the League of Nations and a growing resolve to keep the United States out of the next war in Europe. If the trend was especially marked at first among Republicans, it became powerfully evident among Democrats at their national conventions in 1924 and 1928.[®] It reached a high point in 1932. In February of that

4. *Ibid.*, Chap. X.

5. Among the many books that contributed to American disillusionment about how war came in 1917 and about President Wilson's lofty principles for a new world order and to the triumph of isolationism in the United States after 1918, few, if any, were more widely read or more powerful than *Road to War: America, 1901, it/ij-ipy* (Houghton, 1935) by Walter Millis, editorial writer on the *New York Herald Tribune*. On the jacket this book was advertised as an account of "the frenzied Years of 1914-1917 when . . . a peace-loving democracy, muddled but excited, misinformed and whipped to frenzy, embarked upon its greatest foreign war. . . . Read it and blush! Read it and beware! Read it and renew your youth!"

ft. Beard, *op. cit.*, pp. 45 ff.

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year Franklin D. Roosevelt, then seeking the Democratic nomination for President, publicly declared that he was opposed to American membership in the League of Nations and was in favor of nonentanglement in the political quarrels of Europe; and in November of that year, after making a nationwide campaign mainly on domestic issues, Governor Roosevelt was elected President of the United States.⁷ The trend of Democratic opinion against involvement in the next European war came to a climax in 1935 when Congress, completely dominated by Democrats, passed the first Neutrality Act—a law deliberately designed to keep the United States out of the next European war, already on the horizon, by forbidding a number of specific practices identical with or akin to the practices that had prevailed in 1914-17 and had resulted in “shooting” incidents on the high seas prior to the declaration of war on Germany in April, 1917. Although President Roosevelt dissented from some features of the Neutrality measure he signed it, endorsed the design of Congress to keep the United States out of the next war, and praised the purpose of Congress in his campaign for reelection in 1936.

Only once during the years from 1933 to 1940 did President Roosevelt apparently make an open break with the policy of neutrality for the United States in European wars. That was in his “quarantine speech” at Chicago in October, 1937; but almost immediately he declared in effect that his speech really meant no breach with the Neutrality Act, no intention on his part to intervene by arms in a European war when it came.⁸ Furthermore, if, despite his subsequent denials, the quarantine speech was to be taken at the moment as indicating that President Roosevelt had actually shifted from neutrality to the doctrine of armed intervention, that indication was explicitly canceled in 1939 and 1940 by his various public promises to maintain the neutrality of the United States.

Had President Roosevelt been privately convinced in 1940 that the United States should enter the war, he knew, as well

as Mr. Willkie did, that the sentiment of the Democratic party, and of the country, was almost solidly against that view. Only a small proportion of the delegates at the Republican convention at Philadelphia in June dared to reveal opinions veering in the direction of war for the United States and all such opinions were quickly overridden by the resolute majority of non interventionists.⁹ At the Democratic convention in Chicago a few days later the antiwar sentiment among the delegates was even stronger, if possible, than it had been among the Republicans at Philadelphia; President Roosevelt and his agents bowed to that sentiment.¹⁰

Indeed, in respect of foreign policy, the striking feature of the political campaign of 1940 was the predominance of the antiwar sentiment among Democrats and Republicans—the overwhelming majority of the American people. At no time during that contest did President Roosevelt or Mr. Willkie or any other responsible party leader venture to propose openly that the United States should become involved in foreign wars or should adopt measures calculated to result in war. On the contrary, as far as the two great parties were concerned, the only choice before the voters was between two candidates, President Roosevelt and Mr. Willkie, both engaged in outbidding each other in the solemnity and the precision of their pledges to maintain the neutrality and peace of the United States.

Nor must the circumstances in which their pledges were made be forgotten. Before the campaign of 1940 got into full swing France had fallen a victim to Hitler's conquering hordes, British armed forces had suffered disaster at Dunkirk, (Germany seemed triumphant in western Europe, and Great Britain was beleaguered, daily expecting a German invasion. In other words, the peril of Britain seemed greater in the summer and autumn of 1940 than it did after June, 1941, when Hitler plunged into a war with Russia. Yet it was in those months of Britain's desperation in 1940 that President Roose-

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 276 ff.

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velt and Democratic candidates for Congress, pleading for the suffrages of the American people, promised that, if victorious, they would maintain the security and peace of the United States.

If the processes of popular election and responsible government had any meaning or validity, the antiwar covenants with the American people, freely entered into by the Democratic party and President Roosevelt during the campaign of 1940, were specific commitments to be fulfilled after their victory at the polls in November. Those covenants were explicit mandates for the President in the conduct of foreign affairs in 1941. They were equally explicit mandates for the Democratic Senators and Representatives, who had indubitable control of Congress, in the enactment of legislation relative to all issues of peace and war.

Those covenants were no mere incidents or practical jokes of the campaign. They were, in fact, major promises of the campaign, extensively and definitely expounded in documents and speeches, and were binding in honor and good conscience after the election. In short, unless deceiving the people in matters of life and death is to be regarded as a proper feature of the democratic politics and popular decisions at the polls are to be treated as chimeras, President Roosevelt's peace pledges of 1940 were imperatives for him in 1941; and only by spurning the peace pledges of their party could Democratic Senators and Representatives dominant in Congress enact into law measures calculated to take the United States into war.

To this principle of representative government, admittedly, exceptions are allowable, for example, where a drastic and unexpected alteration in the posture of affairs calls for a change of policy after an election. If, however, President Roosevelt came to the conclusion in 1941 that his antiwar commitments of 1940 had been rendered obsolete by changed circumstances in 1941 and that the United States should engage in war, he was under constitutional and moral obligations to explain to the country the grounds and nature of a reversal in policy. It may be said, to be sure, and has

course, that in many of his addresses in 1941 he declared that there was danger of war coming, danger of attacks upon the United States, and a growing need for more and more preparation for defense. Indeed he did assert publicly that Hitler had designs for conquering the world, suppressing all religions, destroying liberty, and subduing the American people. He did say, more than once, that Hitler intended to attack the United States and, after the “shooting war” had begun, that Hitler had attacked America.¹¹ In some addresses also he claimed that, in the election returns of 1940¹² and the Lend- Lease Act, he had sanction for pursuing an almost unlimited policy in the conduct of foreign affairs; and such addresses could be and occasionally were interpreted by American advocates of war to be public announcements of his intention to push affairs to the extreme of war in support of the Allies if necessary to assure their victory over the Axis Powers. But over against all his declarations about war dangers in 1941 and his claims to a sanction for pursuing an aggressive policy stood his other declarations in line with the antiwar pledges of 1940. Repeatedly, between January 1, 1941, and the middle of December, 1941, he represented his policy as a policy contrary to war, as a quest for the peace and security of the United States.¹³ Once during those months, that is, on November 29, 1941, it is true, he did say that within a year American boys might be fighting, but this utterance was vague and gave no indication that the fighting would be due to a change in his policy as proclaimed in 1940.¹⁴

Nor at his press conferences during 1941, as reported in the *New York Times*,¹⁵ did President Roosevelt make any

11. For a convenient collection of President Roosevelt's speeches and addresses for the year 1941, see *Roosevelt's Foreign Policy, 1933-1941* (Wilfred Funk, Inc., New York, 1942), pp. 318-616. Hereafter referred to as Funk.

12. For instance, his message to Congress, January 6, 1941 (Funk, pp. 320-321), where President Roosevelt made extravagant claims to such a sanction, which were in fact plainly contradicted by party platforms and campaign speeches in 1940. For the platforms and speeches, see Beard, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-323.

13. See below, Chaps. II, IV, V, VI, VII, and VIII.

14. See below, Chap. VII, pp. 201 ff.

15. Owing to the fact that the official minutes of President Roosevelt's press

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statement to the effect that his antiwar policy of 1940 had been -abandoned in favor of a war policy. On the contrary, for instance, at a conference on July 1, 1941, more than three months after the enactment of the Lend-Lease Law, the question of policy was put to him bluntly by a persistent reporter:

“Mr. President, back when the war first started, it was a popular question to ask you if you thought we could keep out of war. . . . You always said that we could.” The President answered that he had not said so. He had stated that he hoped we could. Some observers saw in Mr. Roosevelt’s remark a change in his position, since some time ago he expressed not only his hope but his belief that this country could avoid war. The President insisted, however, that *the matter of wording had not changed his position. He had been giving the same answer to the question of whether this country could keep out of war since Sept. 1, 1939, when hostilities started in Europe.*TM

In other words, on July 1, 1941, President Roosevelt said that his position on the relation of the United States to the war had not changed; that he had been giving the same answer to the question of whether this country could keep out of war since September 1, 1939, when the war started in Europe. What had he been saying during the months from September 1, 1939, to December 31, 1940? The answer is in the official record of his public addresses, papers, and press conferences, for the years 1939 and 1940, prepared under his own direction. During those months he had said publicly and repeatedly that the United States should and would stay out of war.¹⁷ Once in that period, December 29, 1940, he had indicated that there was risk in “any course we may take,” but he had

press conferences taken by his stenographers, now in his papers at the Hyde Park Library, are not yet open to students (see below, p. 194, note), I have been compelled to rely upon the reports of press conferences in the *New York Times*. It is scarcely possible that such a revolutionary step by the President as an announcement of a reversal of his antiwar commitments of 1940 and the adoption of a contrary policy would have escaped the notice of the *New York Times* reporters and publication in the *Times*.

16. *Ibid.*, July 2, 1941. (Italics supplied.)

countered this new note in his line of policy by saying in the line address: "You can, therefore, nail any talk about sending

lies to Europe as deliberate untruth." 18 So ended the year 1941 in respect of his numerous antiwar pledges to the American people.

Whatever intimations of a possible shift in his position President Roosevelt may have intended to convey in the prolix language of his numerous speeches in 1941 on dangers of attacks, none of them signified in clear or definite words, or

even implied, that he had actually made a change to a war policy. Moreover, if this had been his intent, his other utterances to the contrary in 1941 explicitly offset any connotation

that he had abandoned his covenants of 1940 in favor of a direction of affairs toward war. In fact, on the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt de-

clared that the United States was at peace with Japan on

December 7, was engaged in conversations with the Japanese

Government and Emperor "looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific," and that Japan had sprung "a surprise offensive" on this nation.

To be sure, many of his critics alleged that he intended all along to take America into the war by a circuitous route, but President and his supporters in Congress repeatedly insisted that his resolve and purpose were defense and security in the United States. Indeed, as Mr. Justice Frankfurter de-

scribed the management of foreign relations in those troublous

months, the President "so skillfully conducted affairs as to avoid even the appearance of an act of aggression on our part." 19

[H. H. H.], pp. 321 f.

• *Library of Congress Bulletin*, April 28, 1945. Memorial address in honor of Franklin Roosevelt.

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the direction of the President: "If hostilities cannot be avoided, the U.S. desires that Japan commit the first overt act." 20 Nor during subsequent days of strain, between November 27 and December 7, did the President call upon Congress for a declaration of war or for authority to commit any acts of war against any of the three powers which, in his numerous addresses and speeches on war dangers, he had designated as menaces to the United States.²¹

20. In his testimony before the Roberts Commission on Pearl Harbor, General Gerow, in explaining the phrasing of this sentence, said that "the President had definitely stated that he wanted Japan to commit the first overt act." CJC, Part 39, p. 85.

21. The subject of a message to Congress on war dangers was more than once mentioned in the President's "War Cabinet" during the period immediately preceding the Japanese attack. See below, Chap. XVII, pp. 528 ff. But the President refrained from sending such a message to Congress.

CHAPTER II

Representations of Lend-Lease Aid to the Allies

The plank of the Democratic platform which promised material aid to liberty-loving peoples wantonly attacked • "in. imcd no specifications respecting the fulfillment of the pl' dp,i. It was restricted by the conditional clause "consistent 'uh law and not inconsistent with the interests of our own H H mn.11 self-defense" and also by the other planks of the plat-

..... liai committed the President and Congress to the policy ■J Ci ping the country out of war: "We will not participate in lot< ipn wars, and we will not send our Army, naval or air l..... io fight in foreign lands outside of the Americas, ex- ■ 'pi in case of attack. . . . The direction and aim of our

..... policy has been, and will continue to be, the security llh l <Id cnse of our own land and the maintenance of its peace." I L in <■, how to aid the Allies without violating the conditional ■ I h im and the unequivocal commitments to a foreign policy

• ■I '< m ury, defense, and peace for the United States was a illillii uh problem for Democratic leadership after the election ol 1940, and the announcement of plans for solving it was

l mid \\\ it h expectancy as the year 1941 opened.

Inai .id of offering at once to the country and Congress

| plop,| am for the solution of this problem, President Roose-

■ li In p an 10 discuss the subject, as if casually, with journalists, uni hr l ontinued this practice after a bill providing for aid to

l In \lhi s had appeared in Congress and had been taken under

■ "H nli l at ion. On January 1, 1941, readers of metropolitan in v '.papers learned that the President had

sion to some of those present that he was still trying to think out his lend-lease scheme and had by no means completed its details." Indeed, he said to the reporters that "he wished some one could put into the English language details of the lend-lease plan which he had in mind."

The chief question for the President, at this press conference, seemed to be some method of enabling the Allies as beneficiaries of lend-lease to replace the munitions and goods they were to receive on loan or lease. He spoke, for example, of three antiaircraft guns that might be sent to Great Britain. One of them might never have to fire a shot, and it could be sent back to the United States "in time." Another might be extensively used in warfare; it could be repaired and sent back. But the third might be destroyed in the war by a bomb. "How to carry out the replacement of this one was the problem," he mused, "from a legislative standpoint." The matter of British finances came up. The President "indicated no concern. . . . He appeared perfectly certain that ways would be found. He did not fear, he said, that the British would be solvent on Monday and broke on Tuesday." Such was the nature of the information from the White House on lend-lease laid before the American people on New Year's Day, 1941.

Two days later, January 3, 1941, President Roosevelt told Senators Barkley, Harrison, and Byrnes that he would submit to Congress "a comprehensive plan for all-out aid to Great Britain 'short of war.'" He intimated to the Senators that the plan would involve creating a governmental corporation to handle the lend-lease scheme which "he roughly outlined a few days ago." 1

On the day that President Roosevelt informed Democratic leaders in the Senate that he would submit a plan for "all-out aid to Britain 'short of war,'" that is, on January 3, 1941, he held a general press conference at which he spoke of sending Harry Hopkins as his personal representative to Great Britain. Reporters assumed that this move had some relation to aiding

the Allies. But in response to requests for definite statements in respect of Mr. Hopkins' functions, he dismissed the affair lightly as if it had no particular significance.

The President was asked whether Mr. Hopkins would have any special mission. His reply was "No, no, no!" Any title? "No, no!" When asked whether Mr. Hopkins would be on the

government pay roll, the President replied: "I suppose they will pay his expenses—probably a per diem, not very large—
• He is for you or Hopkins! *{Laughter.}*" He assured the journalist that Mr. Hopkins "will have no powers." One journalist persisted: "Will he have any mission to perform?" This the President parried: "No; you can't get anything exciting.

{Laughter.} He's just going over to say 'How do you do?' to a number of my friends. *{Laughter.}*

In his annual message on January 6, 1941, the President informed Congress and the country of a design to furnish enormous

quantities of arms, munitions, implements of war, and

other commodities to the Allies enlisted against the Axis

powers. These aids to "the democracies"—these implements

of war were to be supplied on loan, lease, or otherwise by

the Government of the United States, not by private citizens or institutions of the United States; and they were to be paid in at least temporarily, by American taxpayers, not by the belligerents who received them. It is true that in this

message the President said: "For what we send abroad, we will be repaid within a reasonable time following the close

of this act of war for a neutral government to supply munitions, and implements of war to one of the belligerents

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engaged in a war.³ Private citizens and concerns could supply them, at the risk of capture and seizure by the other belligerent, according to well-known laws of war. A government, however, could not do this without committing an act of war under international law.

For this principle of international law, the United States had vigorously contended since the establishment of independence, never more vigorously than from 1914 to 1917. It had been the main point in a serious dispute between the United States and Great Britain during the American Civil War, when the United States stoutly maintained that Great Britain had committed a hostile act merely by permitting private shipyards in Great Britain to build war vessels for the Southern Confederacy and by allowing them to escape to sea where they preyed on the merchantmen and warships of the United States; Great Britain finally yielded to the contention and paid heavy damages. President Roosevelt admitted the gravity of his proposal in saying: "Such aid is not an act of war, even if a dictator should unilaterally proclaim it so to be"; in other words, a dictator might treat it as an act of war and meet it by an attack on the United States.

On January 7, 1941, the day after his annual message proposing aid to the Allies, President Roosevelt held another press conference. Near the close of the session a journalist remarked: "Reuters is carrying a dispatch out of Stockholm that American troops are occupying Greenland, or have occupied it." The President dismissed the news with the retort: "New one on me! must have been while I was asleep. {Laughter.}"⁴ At a press conference, January 10, 1941, President Roosevelt called for swift action on the Lend-Lease Bill, "utmost speed," but he left "the method of obtaining it" to Congress.[®] Although the press conference was long, the actual nature and purposes of the bill were apparently not discussed at all. One

3. For Secretary Henry L. Stimson's attempt to provide some sanction of international law for the Lend-Lease Act, see Hearings before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Lend-Lease Bill, 1941, Part 1, pp. 89 ff.

4. *Public Papers*, 1940 Volume, p. 689.

point of major significance for foreign policy, however, seems to have been considered. The bill provided that its terms, which conferred enormous powers upon the President, were to be effective, "notwithstanding the provisions of any other law." Evidently questions were raised at the conference about this sweeping clause which was to repeal all other legislation that stood in the way of the bill's authorizations; but the President specifically denied that the Johnson Act, barring loans to belligerents, and the Neutrality Act would be nullified by the repealer. Thus he assured Congress and the country that American neutrality as provided by the Neutrality Act would not be abrogated by the enactment of the Lend-Lease Bill. So far, the antiwar covenants of 1940 appeared to be

firm.

In the meantime, Burton K. Wheeler, Democratic Senator from Montana, had begun to inquire about the logic of the lend-lease scheme and to criticize its principal features. On January 4, he called "idiotic" the project outlined by President Roosevelt at his press conference on January 3, and declared: "If it is our war, how can we justify lending them stuff and asking them to pay us back? If it is our war, we ought to have

the courage to go over and fight it, but it is not our war."⁶

About a week later, in a radio broadcast, Senator Wheeler criticized the Lend-Lease Bill at length. "Never before," he said, "has the Congress of the United States been asked by any President to violate international law. Never before has this nation resorted to duplicity in the conduct of its foreign affairs. Never before has the United States given to one man the power to strip this Nation of its defenses. Never before has

the Nation coldly and flatly been asked to abdicate." Moreover, the Senator declared: "The lend-lease-give program is the New Deal's triple A. foreign policy; it will plow under every fourth American boy."⁷ Approval of the lend-lease

⁶ *Ibid.*, January 5, 1941.

⁷ *Washington Post*, January 12, 1941, p. 1.

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project by Congress, the Senator asserted, "means war, open and complete warfare. . . ."

At his press conference two days later, January 14, 1941, President Roosevelt remarked: "I don't think I have any news. Anybody got any news?" A reporter evidently thought that the lend-lease discussion was news, for he asked the President whether he would care to comment on the proposition to put a time limit on the bill. The President replied: "Oh, no; because if I start commenting on one [proposed limit], you boys will be asking me about two or three every Tuesday and two or three every Friday; and you merely start a chain. Don't let's start one of those chains now."

But the issue of peace or war was already before the country and the probable consequences which would flow from the enactment of the Lend-Lease Bill into law were being discussed with great anxiety. As if expressing this popular interest, a reporter inquired: "Mr. President, do you have any comment on the label that has been put on the lend-lease bill as a 'blank check' bill?" The President replied in tones of anger: "Yes, I suppose so; the easiest answer is: 'Write me another that you would not put that label on but which would accomplish the same objective.' That is a perfectly good answer to all these people. That is not an answer at all, however, to those who talk about plowing under every fourth American child, which I regard as the most untruthful, as the most dastardly, unpatriotic thing that has ever been said. Quote me on that. That really is the rottenest thing that has been said in public life in my generation."

At this point a reporter wanted to know where that statement about "plowing under" had been originally made. The President answered: "I read it in the paper; it has been quoted by several people. . . ." He was then asked: "You say you don't remember who said it?" The President brought the interview to a conclusion with the words: "No; it was said by three or four people. In other words, it's a good time to kill a proposed slogan, at birth." 8

At a press conference on January 17, President Roosevelt characterized as verging on the "absurd" numerous suggestions for limiting the powers to be given to him by the bill. Some of these suggestions he discussed with the derisive raillery he had often displayed on such occasions. It had been said that under the terms of the bill, the President could give away the American Navy or buy the British Navy. As to giving away the American Navy, he said: "The bill did not prevent the President of the United States from standing on his head, but the President did not expect to stand on his head." As to buying

the British Navy, he remarked that supposedly Congress might authorize him to buy the German Navy, too. "And didn't the reporters think that this was awful cow-jumping-over-the-fence stuff?" Asked whether he had discussed the bill with a representative of the Vatican, "Mr. Roosevelt leaned back in his chair and roared with laughter. Maybe he was trying to buy the Vatican Navy, he suggested."

Taking seriously the issue of limitations which the President thus dismissed with laughter, many members of Congress on both sides of the party line insisted that several of the powers conferred on the President by his plans were too ■ \\ a ping; and in fact certain of the bill's provisions were hastily amended in this respect before it was passed. Evidently in the face of this primary and practical objection to the original Lend Lease Bill, a reporter at the press conference on January

17 inquired whether, since the President did not intend to use ■ one of the powers in question, he had any objections to putting limitations on them. In response, "Mr. Roosevelt replied that the bill did not restrict him from standing on his head, implying that such limitations were unnecessary." When

the reporter persisted, the President said that things were changing from day to day and that the proposed legislative

1. Lullin. *Ibid.*, p. 712. On January 13, 1941, Admiral Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, wrote secretly to Admiral Kimmel at Hawaii, "we are heading for this war." See below, Chap. XIV.

9 *New York Times*, January 18, 1941, pp. 1, 4.

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project by Congress, the Senator asserted, “means war, open and complete warfare. . . .”

At his press conference two days later, January 14, 1941, President Roosevelt remarked: “I don’t think I have any news. Anybody got any news?” A reporter evidently thought that the lend-lease discussion was news, for he asked the President whether he would care to comment on the proposition to put a time limit on the bill. The President replied: “Oh, no; because if I start commenting on one [proposed limit], you boys will be asking me about two or three every Tuesday and two or three every Friday; and you merely start a chain. Don’t let’s start one of those chains now.”

But the issue of peace or war was already before the country and the probable consequences which would flow from the enactment of the Lend-Lease Bill into law were being discussed with great anxiety. As if expressing this popular interest, a reporter inquired: “Mr. President, do you have any comment on the label that has been put on the lend-lease bill as a ‘blank check’ bill?” The President replied in tones of anger: “Yes, I suppose so; the easiest answer is: ‘Write me another that you would not put that label on but which would accomplish the same objective.’ That is a perfectly good answer to all these people. That is not an answer at all, however, to those who talk about plowing under every fourth American child, which I regard as the most untruthful, as the most dastardly, unpatriotic thing that has ever been said. Quote me on that. That really is the rottenest thing that has been said in public life in my generation.”

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representative of the Vatican, “Mr. Roosevelt leaned back in his chair and roared with laughter. Maybe he was trying to buy the Vatican Navy, he suggested.”

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■ many of the powers in question, he had any objections to pulling limitations on them. In response, “Mr. Roosevelt replied that the bill did not restrict him from standing on his head, implying that such limitations were unnecessary.” When the reporter persisted, the President said that things were hanging from day to day and that the proposed legislative limitation of power represented “just a precautionary measure for maintaining American defense.”⁹

Among the other grave issues raised in Congress and

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in relation to the Lend-Lease Bill was the question of using American naval vessels to convoy supplies to Great Britain. On this point it had been said in various quarters that it would seem strange for the United States to manufacture huge quantities of supplies for Great Britain, turn them over to British ships in American harbors, and then quietly allow German submarines to send them all to the bottom of the sea, instead of assuring delivery by convoying supply ships into British waters or to Iceland. Moreover, it had been contended that since convoying was an act of war under international law, a resort to that practice by the United States would inevitably lead to "shooting," if not immediately to war.¹⁰ At a press conference on January 21, a reporter asked President Roosevelt about his intentions with regard to convoys. The President replied that he "had never considered using American naval vessels to convoy ships bearing supplies to Great Britain." He also said that "the suggestion was new to him and asked what about the Falkland Islands [in the South Atlantic], the Celebes [in the Dutch East Indies], or the Andamans [in the Bay of Bengal]."

Another question brought up in public discussions of the bill pertained to the broad provision of the measure allowing the President to transfer equipment and materials of war to Great Britain. In this connection fear was expressed that he might transfer to foreign powers ships of war that were needed for the defense of the United States in the Atlantic and in the Pacific, as he had done in 1940. This point was also raised at the press conference on January 21, 1941; and the President "described as cow-jumping-over-the-moon, Old Mother Hub bard stuff assertions that he would transfer American naval ships to Britain or any other foreign power. He also reiterated that he had no intention of standing on his head." ¹¹

Commenting, February 4, on a statement recently made by Senator Wheeler to the effect that five sixths of the American

10. See below, p. 30, and Chap. III.

airplane output was going to Great Britain, the President remarked that, of course, one could work out all kinds of things with figures and these figures must be very satisfactory to the Reich dictator. Asked what he would do first if the Lend-Lease Bill passed, he responded that "he would go out into the middle of Pennsylvania Avenue and stand on his head, which would not be prohibited." Thereupon a reporter inquired: "How would that aid beleaguered democracies?" The President's reply was that "it would result in some publicity."¹²

While the discussion of the Lend-Lease Bill was "dragging along" in Congress, Jesse Jones, head of the Department of Commerce and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, went before the House Committee on Banking and Currency and asked for the speedy passage of a bill allowing the Federal Housing Administration to insure mortgages up to the amount of \$100,000,000. In the course of his testimony, Mr. Jones ex-

plained: "We're in the war; at least we're nearly in the war; we're preparing for it; when you do that, you've got to throw money away." Bethinking himself, Mr. Jones had the official stenographer strike the words from the committee's formal record.¹³ But his words were given publicity by the press.

After Mr. Jones' blunt declaration to the House Committee on Banking and Currency became known, "President Roosevelt described the statement as a lot of words that do not mean

anything. He said that he did not mean for his remarks to apply particularly to Mr. Jones, but to the press or anyone else who expressed himself in a similar manner."¹⁴ The form of the President's characterization was somewhat cryptic, but it is interesting to note that he declined to deplore the use of such words as "we are in the war,"

or "nearly in it," or "preparing for it." Taken in connection with the numerous antiwar statements he had previously made, it implied that he disapproved of introducing into

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cussions the idea that the United States was going into the war or preparing for it while the Lend-Lease Bill was under consideration.

Before the Lend-Lease Bill passed, a letter directed to President Roosevelt in the name of the League of Women Voters informed him that the League favored the measure but made some inquiries as to his intentions. Replying to this letter on March 5, 1941, the President said: "In acknowledging my appreciation of the League's position, I am glad to reiterate the assurance that the policy under which the measure would be operated would not be a war policy but the contrary."¹⁵

When President Roosevelt's public comments on the Lend-Lease Bill during its course through Congress are reduced to substantial elements respecting the foreign policy implicit in the measure, they amount to the following statements:

The law did not nullify the Neutrality Act designed to assure the neutrality of the United States in foreign wars.

The idea of using the United States Navy to convoy ships to Great Britain or Iceland had not been considered and was to be dismissed as irrelevant, as if beyond consideration or merely amusing.

Senator Wheeler's assertion that the lend-lease program would "plow under every fourth American boy" and meant open and complete war was "the most dastardly and unpatriotic thing ever said," "the rottenest thing that has been said in public life in my generation."

Jesse Jones' declaration that "We're in the war; at least we are nearly in it; we're preparing for it" was a lot of words that did not mean anything.

The Lend-Lease Act was to be administered not as a war measure but the contrary; that is, as a peace measure.

Hence it was to be concluded or inferred that President Roosevelt's public statements on this occasion were in line with his antiwar covenants of 1940.

15. *Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, March 8, 1941, Vol. 152, p. 1517;

**THE LEND-LEASE BILL AND THE PRIMARY ISSUES RAISED IN
CONGRESS**

What powers, in fact, did the Lend-Lease Bill, as originally introduced "into" Congress, confer upon the President? Without any limitation as to time or cost or quantity or number, it authorized the President to do the following, among other things: (1) to designate as a beneficiary of its provisions any country in the world, "whose defense the President deems vital to the defense of the United States"; (2) to manufacture or otherwise procure any weapon, munition, aircraft, boat, or other article of defense; (3) to sell, transfer, exchange, lease, lend, or otherwise dispose of any such implements, articles of defense, and machinery or tools for the manufacture of the

■...line to any government so designated by the President; (4) to repair, outfit, and recondition defense articles for such designated government; (5) to communicate to such government any defense information pertaining to such defense articles; and (6) to determine the terms and conditions of receipt and repayment by such foreign governments, or any other direct or indirect benefit which the President deems satisfactory. And all these things the President could do at his pleasure and on his own motion, "*notwithstanding the provisions of any other law.*" (Italics supplied.)

So far as the specific language of the bill was concerned, the President could do all these things as he pleased until Congress saw fit to repeal the law, perhaps over his veto by a two-thirds vote. Nor was he required to report to Congress in any way and although he did under the law. Within the broad sweep of the Lend-Lease Bill, if passed, his own decisions were to be law. And as to final settlement for such aids to other governments designated by the President, he could make any arrangements whatever which he *deemed* satisfactory, that is, satisfactory to himself.

During the hearings and debates on the Lend-Lease Bill in January, February, and March, 1941, many controversial issues were raised and discussed. Among them four

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had direct bearings on the intentions behind the bill and the foreign policy which it implied—peace or war:

By whom was the Lend-Lease Bill conceived and drafted?

Are the ships carrying munitions to the beneficiaries to be convoyed by American naval vessels or left to the mercies of the swarming Axis submarines?

If these ships are to be convoyed by American naval vessels, is not this convoying itself an act of war on the part of the United States?

Is the bill really calculated to fulfill the Administration's pledges on maintaining neutrality and keeping the country out of war or is it to be regarded as authorizing the President to set out boldly on the road to war?

AUTHORSHIP OF THE BILL

Who drafted the bill? On this question, immediately asked in Congress and outside, neither the President nor anybody authorized to speak for him furnished to the American public any definite information.

In his note to his message of January 6, 1941, as reprinted in his *Public Papers*, 1940 Volume, the President gave no clue as to the origins of the measure; he merely said: "Pursuant to these recommendations [in his message], the 'Lend-Lease Bill' was introduced into Congress on January 10, 1941." Secretary Hull was equally cryptic. In the State Department's volume *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941* (July, 1943, ed., p. 100) it is simply stated: "Early in January 1941 there was introduced in Congress a bill to enable the Government to furnish aid to nations whose defense was deemed by the President to be vital to the defense of the United States."

At hearings before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and during the debates in the House and Senate, a persistent search was made for the author or authors of the Lend-Lease Bill who could assume responsibility for its terms and explain

the purpose of the project in general and the purposes of its several provisions in detail. But from the beginning to the end, from the day the bill was presented to Congress until it was finally passed, this search was fruitless. The Administration leaders who introduced the bill in the House and in the Senate assumed responsibility for introducing it, and undertook to expound it as they understood it. Yet even they were unable, or unwilling, to name the author or authors of the bill, so

that the designer or designers of the measure could be questioned as to the meaning which he or they alone knew and intended, as the bill was drafted, section by section and line by line.

From the documents, official papers, and congressional speeches pertaining to the origin and passage of the bill a volume could be written on the search for the authorship, general purposes, and specific intentions of the measure. But as far as the hearings of the House Committee and the debates of the House were concerned, the situation was described on the basis of documentation by Representative Karl E. Mundt, of South Dakota, on February 4, 1941. While it is true that Mr. Mundt was speaking as a Republican and introduced critical observations of his own, he had records to support him when he said that Secretary Hull, Secretary Morgenthau, Secretary Stimson, and Secretary Knox disclaimed personal responsibility for the authorship of the Lend-Lease Bill.

Although some of Mr. Mundt's animadversions may be discounted on grounds of opposition partisanship, the views he expressed represented opinions widely held in the House and, therefore, with justification deserve quotation at length:

Mr. Chairman, we are confronted with a very strange and a very unique situation—a situation in which the Secretary of State, Mr. Hull, charged with the responsibility of maintaining the peaceful neutral relations of America, refuses to admit that he had anything to do with drafting the legislation now before us. We are confronted with a situation in which the Secretary of the Treasury, who had

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if he can, disclaims any authorship of the bill. Stranger than that, we are confronted with a situation in which the Secretary of War, Mr. Stimson, a man certainly who by his belligerent advocacy of quick and vigorous steps, shorter and shorter of war, marks him as a man who would not disclaim any responsibility in this respect, the Secretary of War charged with defending these United States, a Secretary of War who must operate under a bill labeled “for purposes of national defense” repeatedly states he had nothing to do with drafting the bill. He said he did not see it until its draft was completed—and so it goes, Secretary after Secretary testified in that fashion.

It may be that those portions of the bill which say “for other purposes” have some well-known consultants who helped draft the bill; but insofar as the other portions of the bill at least are concerned, and insofar as its national-defense purposes are concerned, we find this strange piece of legislation disclaimed by the Secretaries of the President’s Cabinet. We find this piece of legislation— surreptitiously conceived, individually disclaimed, of unknown parentage— placed before us, like a baby in a basket on our door step, and we are asked to adopt it.

I think it is mighty important, Mr. Chairman, that we pause to wonder a bit why this legislation, containing so many powers that the President says he did not ask for and that the President did not want, was drawn in such a unique manner, because it is kind of stimulating to contemplate what person or what power put into this bill those undesired and undesirable powers, since they are definitely found in the legislation. We are asked to violate all pretenses of neutrality; we are asked to disregard the remaining vestiges of international law; and the Secretary of State, charged with the responsibility of maintaining our peaceful relations, disclaims authorship.

I have said that this bill is a very important piece of legislation and that it was conceived in a most unique manner. I think that the vast delegation of powers taking place in this bill, enormous as they are, probably are equaled and excelled only by the anonymity of their enormity. I think it is amazing that we are confronted with a situation of this type in

Representations of Lend-Lease Aid to the Allies 27

questions as they possibly can concerning whether or not the bill is wise.

If this bill is designed primarily, as I am afraid it is, for "the other purposes" aspect of this act, this evasiveness is understandable; but

If the bill is devised primarily for the national-defense purposes of this act, it seems to be uncommon strange that those charged with administering it should disclaim any responsibility for initiating

this particular legislation.¹⁶

The search conducted by United States Senators for the author or authors who could explain the purpose and meaning of the Lend-Lease Bill was no more successful. When Secretary Hull came before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations he refused to discuss certain vital matters except in

confidence, under the seal of secrecy. In his testimony before the Finance Committee in charge of the bill, he had referred to it as "a Treasury bill," and when he appeared before the Senate Committee he declined or "preferred" not to discuss the matter of authorship.¹⁷

When asked by Senator LaFollette whether there was someone who could give the Senate Committee a broad outline of the powers intended to be conferred by the bill, Secretary Morgenthau answered "No." Under further questioning, Mr. Morgenthau disclaimed ability to deal with any save the financial aspects of the measure, and gave only a general account of its history. At his first appearance before the Senate Committee on January 28, 1941, Mr. Morgenthau made the following statements:

"Several weeks ago the President asked me to come over to his

office after he had had a talk with the Speaker of the House, and he asked that the Treasury get into touch with the Speaker, who, in turn, would put us into touch with Mr. Beaman [Congressional draftsman], . . .

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the bill I think is incorrect, because I attended at least a half-dozen conferences with the Democratic leaders both in [the] Senate and the House, and last night with the minority leaders.

I might point out that at no time has any meeting taken place in my office. They have always been either at the White House or at the State Department. . . .

Sen a t o r John son of California. So you cannot tell us the gene sis of the bill or who was the principal scrivener who wrote it.

Mr. Mo r g e n t h a u . That is correct. I think it was a product of many brains.¹⁸

Further inquiries failed to disclose any person prepared, by knowledge of the bill's origin and purposes, to explain its provisions. At length, Senator Alben Barkley declared that he was the sponsor of the bill in the Senate and prepared to explain it as best he could and as he understood it. Thereupon Senator Bennett Clark made the following proposition:

That that portion of the Secretary of State's remarks before the House committee on foreign affairs, in which he said this was the Treasury, and also the remarks of the Secretary of the Treasury this morning, in which he said it was not the Treasury, and also the remarks of the distinguished Senator, and I hope the next Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Mr. Byrnes, in which he said it was Congress, be printed together as an exhibit to the Senator's testimony.¹⁹

To this proposition, Senator Barkley replied:

I certainly have no objection to that. I wish merely to state that regardless of who wrote the bill, whether it was written by a taxi cab driver or the Attorney General of the United States, the language speaks for itself. It is plain enough for anybody to under stand, it seems to me, regardless of who had anything to do with the writing of this bill.²⁰

As the House and Senate Committee hearings and the debates on the bill in Congress revealed again and again, Senator

Mr. L. Icy and his colleagues who sponsored the bill did not in fact find the language of the measure plain enough for everybody to understand. On the contrary they were often unable to answer accurately questions as to the meaning of the bill in general or specific clauses of the bill; and any person willing to spend several months comparing the explanations offered by

the sponsors of the bill with the actions of the President under which it can discover numerous discrepancies between what it is said about the meaning of the bill and what was done under its authority.²¹

However, amid the disputes about the authorship and purpose and meaning of the bill, Secretary Morgenthau made three points "plain enough for anybody to understand," in which, as Senator Barkley remarked, the bill "was written by a typist." The first point was that "several weeks" before January 28, 1941, apparently in December, or perhaps November, 1940, President Roosevelt was talking with the speaker of the House of Representatives about the proposed bill and he called Secretary Morgenthau to the White House to confer on the measure. Secretary Morgenthau's sec-

■ -and point was that meetings of persons concerned in preparing the bill were "always" held "either at the White House or at the State Department." Yet the President refrained from ascribing authorship of the bill and from explaining it by means

• of a special message to Congress when the bill was introduced in the House by Mr. McCormack, the Democratic majority leader in the House and by Mr. Barkley, the Democratic majority leader in the Senate.

So much for Secretary Morgenthau's information to Congress and the public in January, 1941, when the Lend-Lease Bill was pending. But about six years later, Mr. Morgenthau told what purported to be the truth about the genesis of the bill in *Collier's* for October 18, 1947. There he printed an extract from a letter "now published for the first

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from Mr. Churchill to President Roosevelt, dated December 7, 1940, proposing a form of American aid to Great Britain free from what President Roosevelt called "the dollar sign." There Mr. Morgenthau stated that President Roosevelt approved and developed Mr. Churchill's idea and that "the Lend-Lease bill was born" in the White House, December 30, 1940, at a conference attended by the President, Mr. Morgenthau, and Arthur Purvis, head of the British-French purchasing commission. The hour of the "birth" was about noon that day. According to Mr. Morgenthau's account in 1947, the Lend-Lease Bill was drafted on January 2, 1941, by "Ed Foley, my crack general counsel, and his bright assistant, Oscar Cox," and some changes were later made by them on suggestions from other departments. The bill so drawn was approved by Secretaries Hull, Stimson, and Knox. Mr. Morgenthau also related in *Collier's* in 1947, that there was opposition to the bill on the part of subordinates in the State Department and printed a colloquy between Secretary Knox and himself in 1941 as follows: Secretary Knox, "Let's organize a hanging bee over there someday and hang the ones that you and I pick out." Mr. Morgenthau, "We won't leave many people over there."

THE QUESTION OF CONVOYING MERCHANT SHIPS 22

Among the arguments brought up against the Lend-Lease Bill was the contention that it would be folly for the United States to send billions of dollars worth of munitions on the way to Great Britain only to be sunk by German submarines, that the American Navy would be used to convoy or protect such shipments, and that this convoying of merchant ships loaded with munitions across the Atlantic would be an act of hostility or aggression—an act of war on the part of the United States. This matter was brought to the attention of Secretary Knox during the hearings on the Lend-Lease Bill. Senator Nye said to him: "You stand very much opposed to the idea of convoy-

ing merchantmen across the Atlantic?" Secretary Knox replied: "Yes." To the question: "You look upon it as an act of war?" Secretary Knox responded: "Yes." But in answer to other questions, the Secretary said that, if the President ordered a convoy, he would obey the orders as a subordinate of the Commander in Chief.²³ In other words, Secretary Knox was prepared to commit an act of war against Germany in obedience to the President's orders.

Although Secretary Knox, head of the Navy Department, whose business it would be to convoy merchant ships bearing munitions across the seas if this policy was decided upon, pressed opposition to convoying and declared it to be an act of war in itself, Mr. Stimson, Secretary of War, took a different view. At the Senate Committee hearings, he was quoted as declaring himself in favor of sending munitions to Great Britain "if necessary in our own ships and under convoy."²⁴ He was not sure whether convoying would actually put the United States into the war. On the basis of the Kellogg Pact of 1928 and some resolutions adopted at a meeting of the International Law Association at Budapest in 1934, Secretary Stimson claimed that everything authorized by the Lend-Lease Bill was justifiable "by international law itself,

or, that international law has been interpreted in the light of a similar treaty which this country initiated." The governments which had signed the Kellogg Pact in 1928 had not recognized or accepted the interpretation of international law put forward by professors at Budapest in 1934, but, in Mr. Stimson's opinion, neither convoying nor anything else authorized by the Lend-Lease Bill would constitute an act of war or violate international law.

What were Administration supporters in Congress to do in this dilemma? Opponents of the bill demanded an amendment

prohibiting the use of convoys on the ground that, as Secretary

■ 11« uiip'. before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Lend-

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Knox had said, it would constitute “an act of war.” If, the critics asked in substance of the majority, you want to avoid war, as you claim, and convoying is an act of war, why not add a safeguard in the interest of peace by incorporating in the bill a provision to that effect? Over this pointed question a sharp contest was waged, partly in public and partly behind the scenes. Counterquestions were raised by sponsors of the measure: Has Congress the power under the Constitution to forbid the President as Commander in Chief to employ the Navy for convoying purposes, even though convoying is generally regarded as an act of war? Shall we strike down with one hand all we grant with the other? Why pass the bill if we nullify it by a destructive prohibition?

Entangled in logical and moral difficulties, advocates of the bill in Congress evolved a formula that appeared to be in line with the idea of keeping the United States out of war by aiding the enemies of the Axis Powers. The formula took the shape of two paragraphs which were added to the original bill as amendments. These paragraphs read: “(d) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize or to permit the authorization of convoying by naval vessels of the United States, (e) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize or to permit the authorization of the entry of any American vessel into a combat area in violation of section 3 of the Neutrality Act of 1939.”

The language of these amendments was apparently explicit. Nothing in the act was to be construed by the President as authorizing or permitting the use of convoys or as authorizing him to send American vessels into combat areas. Nor was there in existing legislation any provision authorizing him to take such actions in the circumstances contemplated by the Lend- Lease Act. Furthermore, such actions were, to all appearances, explicitly forbidden by another amendment attached to the original bill, namely, Section 10. It read: “Nothing in this Act *shall be construed to change existing law relating to the use of the land and naval forces of the United States against*

in so far as such use relates to the manufacture, procurement, repair of defense articles, the communication of information, and *other noncombatant purposes* enumerated in this Act.” (Italics supplied.)

In other words, Congress declared that the Lend-Lease law conferred on the President no power whatever to use the armed forces for combatant purposes, that in executing the law he could not order the armed forces to commit acts of war. This provision was designed to meet the charge made by many Democrats and Republicans that otherwise President Roosevelt could treat the measure as authorizing him to wage undeclared war under color of “aiding the Allies.” Indeed, it is doubtful whether Congress would have passed the bill if provisions against convoying and committing “combatant,” i.e., fighting, acts had not been

ARCHES FOR THE MEANING OF THE BILL AT HEARINGS OF CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES

In his public statements before the House and Senate Committees in charge of the Lend-Lease Bill, Secretary Hull took a definite line. He represented the bill as based on the principle that the United States should give immediate aid to Great Britain “and other victims of attack” in the interest of self-defense for the United States. The keynote of his persistent theme was “defense”—the bill provided the machinery for the effective use of our resources “in our own self-defense.” This formula he recited again and again. If he regarded the measure as constituting an act of war or as leading inexorably to war on the part of the United States, he gave no indication

of that opinion in his published testimony.

Speaking as head of the Department of the Navy, Secretary Knox sought to convince the members of the House Committee that the Lend-Lease Bill was a necessary measure of

1. Hearings before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 77th Congress,

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national defense, intended to gain time in which to make military and naval preparations to maintain the “essential interests” of the American people “throughout the world”.

To keep our land secure we must prevent the establishment of strong aggressive military power in any part of the New World. We can keep non-American military power out of our hemisphere only through being able to control the seas that surround our shores. Once we lose the power to control even a part of those seas, inevitably the wars of Europe and Asia will be transferred to the Americas.

We need time to build ships and to train their crews. We need time to build our outlying bases so that we can operate our fleets as a screen for our continent. We need time to train our armies, to accumulate war stores, to gear our industry for defense.

Only Great Britain and its fleet can give us that time. And they need our help to survive.

If we fully organize the mental and material resources of the American people, we can give Britain that help and simultaneously can build a strong military defense for ourselves. The cost to us in money, effort and sacrifice will be great—but that cost will be far greater even in the immediate future, should we now stand aside and let Britain fall.

We are a strong Nation, though our military strength is still largely potential. I believe that the American people have what it takes in character, courage and wisdom to guard this country and to guard this hemisphere. But to keep from engaging in a desperate struggle in American territory, they need time to make ready their arms. They can get time to make ready, and can maintain their essential interests throughout the world, only so long as Britain and its fleet survive. With our unstinted help, I firmly believe that Britain cannot be defeated.

We will act in our best national interests, therefore, if, while increasing our naval power as fast as we can, we provide the British Commonwealth with the means that will bring her through this tragic crisis.²⁶

In his testimony before the House Committee. Secretary

I stood firmly by the bill exactly as it was written, laid stress

on defense, opposed limiting amendments, and categorically denied that, in case the aid given to Great Britain and China led to sustain them in Europe and Asia, the consequence of the Lend-Lease Bill, if enacted into law, would necessarily be the sending of American manpower to fight in Europe and Asia. The following passages from the Hearings before the House Committee give his views on the bill as a "peace" measure and on efforts to calculate the probable consequences of

the actions to be taken under it, if duly passed:

Mr. Fish: . . . have you any objection if the Congress inserts a provision in the bill prohibiting the President from giving away

any part of the Navy?

Mr. Stimson: For myself I submit that question is one which

should be asked of the Secretary of the Navy. But on the knowledge-

• I think that I have of the situation I should object to it, because I can well conceive that a portion, or some of the Navy, might be transferred under conditions that might be very advantageous to meet a situation that might develop. . . .

Mr. Fish: Is not our outer defense our Navy? Has not the Congress appropriated for a two-ocean Navy?

Secretary Stimson: No sir; only in one sense. Our first line of defense is our diplomacy, if you will permit me to say it, by which in any way to keep as many enemies away from us, and to get as many allies on our side as we can throughout the whole world. Then

the Navy is another line, and the line of bases is another line. The

last line is the continental Army, in a situation which will never occur, I hope; namely, when an enemy has got us on our soil and is ready to do to us what the Germans did in the last spring.

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Secre t a r y Stimson : I do not see any question there. I heard statement of Mr. Fish's

Mr. Fish : I will ask you point blank if Great Britain is our first line of defense, are you in favor of going to

Secre t a r y Stimson : I am in favor of assisting Great Britain maintain her fleet. I am in favor of that. At present, she, being war, is providing for the defense of the North Atlantic, and we are vitally interested in that defense.

Mr. Fish : Is it not rather cowardly of us, if England is fighting our battle, not to go into the war?

Secre t a r y Stimson : I am not going to pursue this line of argument. We are not concerned with it in this bill...28

Mr. Tinkham : May I ask you if that is your fixed opinion, that there should not be put into this bill a clause which would forbid our warships going into belligerent waters?

Secre t a r y Stimson : Yes; that is my opinion, most certainly.

No one can foresee what situations might arise that will make it most essential, in the light of our defense—not offense—for our country to send its warships into what you call belligerent waters. Mr. Tinkham : May I ask you under what conditions,

as you conceive them, we should send warships into belligerent waters

without that being an offensive action?

Secre t a r y Stimson : Well, I do not think I care to indulge in speculation. That is too broad a field. But I say the thing might happen. I do not believe that this country should in any circumstances tie its hands behind its back.

Mr. Tinkham : Even to keep out war?

Secre t a r y Stimson : I think it would be perhaps one of the surest ways of getting into war, or, at any rate, of getting into a position where we could be safely attacked, and attacked under disadvantages. . . .

Mr. Tinkham : You are in favor of the United States remaining

at peace, if possible, are you not?

Secre t a r y Stimson : I am certainly not in favor of

Secretary Stimson : Let me say first that nothing in this bill touches upon that question at all....29

Mr. Tinkham : . . . May I put the question in this way, Mr. Secretary: If, under this bill, our resources are put behind and behind China, which means in Europe and in Asia, and they are not sufficient, and China seems to be falling and England seems to be falling, is it not inherent, once having committed ourselves with all our resources, to send our manpower in order to maintain our dignity and our position?

Secretary Stimson : I do not see that it would be from anything now before me at all a consequence that would necessarily follow from that. I think, on the contrary, it is the best bet we can make to save us from sending our manpower.

That is my view. I may be mistaken. But I am very strongly and clearly of that view. Mr. Tinkham : I take exactly the opposite position, Mr. Secretary. Now, if there is nothing in the bill to prohibit cargo convoys, would you object to having an amendment in the bill which forbade convoys by the American Navy to Great Britain or to other countries?

Secretary Stimson : I think the bill should stand as it does.

Mr. Tinkham : In other words, you object to any such limitation?

Secretary Stimson : I prefer the bill as it is, on the same principle that I said before. I think this Government of ours, the United States, should not tie its hands, or even its finger, in the face of the emergency that exists now; and all of these little things are in the nature of shackles which you would have put on this Nation in a rival emergency. No one can foresee whether or not that might not be very dangerous to it in an unforeseen emergency.30

Among the other expositions of the Lend-Lease Bill before the House Committee that of William C. Bullitt was regarded

as having especial significance. Mr. Bullitt had been the American Ambassador at Paris during the fall of France and had made speeches which, as reported in the press, sounded like a

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States, by aiding Great Britain, and to prepare against a probable invasion of this hemisphere that would menace American liberties. Mr. Bullitt said:

We are not prepared today to meet an attack by the totalitarian states that are leagued against us. We must buy time in which to prepare.

We can buy that time only by making certain that the British fleet will continue to hold the totalitarian forces in Europe while our fleet watches in the Pacific. . . .

Should the British Navy be eliminated and should the Panama Canal be blocked before we are prepared, invasion of the Western Hemisphere would be almost certain. It is entirely certain that the shipbuilding facilities in the hands of the totalitarian dictators would be at least four times as great as our shipbuilding facilities. . . . We should have to organize our American life on a military basis from top to bottom and maintain it on a military basis throughout years of misery and years of totalitarian propaganda directed against our democratic form of government. How long, under those conditions, we could maintain the liberties that have been the birthright of every American since the birth of our Nation, no man knows.

These would be to us the consequences of British defeat. We must, therefore, for our own self-preservation, try to see to it that Great Britain is not defeated.

We are determined not to be drawn into this war. We leave out of discussion, therefore, the policy of going to war, although we know that the most certain way to insure against risk of British defeat would be for us to go to war. We set two limits on our support of Great Britain: First, we will not declare war; second, we will not ourselves initiate military or naval hostilities.

We can diminish the danger to ourselves only by supplying promptly to the British and the other states that are now holding the totalitarian war machines away from our shores every material, munition and arm that they need. 31

Mr. Johnson : The charge has been made by some of the opponents of this bill that it is a war bill, that it is a bill designed to get us into war. I would like to have your opinion on that.

Mr. Bullitt : In my opinion, the bill will provide means for

effectively aiding Great Britain. There is only one result of this war that can make certain that we will come into the war, which is that Great Britain shall be beaten, because if Great Britain is beaten, we will be attacked in this hemisphere—not probably first directly by an attack on us, but by a movement through South America. . . .

Mr. Johnson: Do you believe, then, that this bill, instead of being designed to get us into war, would be calculated, if it passes, to aid England and prevent its fall, and therefore keep the war out of America?

Mr. Bullitt: I believe exactly that. . . ,32

Opponents of the Lend-Lease Bill before the House Committee, whatever their differences of opinion as to details of the project, were agreed on one thing: This is a war bill which grants to the President almost dictatorial power over the human and material resources of the United States and will, if enacted, lead inevitably to participation in the war on a world scale. Colonel Charles Lindbergh declared it to be “a major step to getting us into war.” 33 Norman Thomas maintained that it would eventuate in a “total war on two oceans and five continents; a war likely to result in stalemate; perhaps in such a breakup of western civilization, that Stalin, with his vast armies and loyal Communist followers, will be the victor. . . .” Mr. Thomas charged President Roosevelt with wanting to take a gamble with the lives and destinies of the American people, or “to put us in war gradually, knowing that we would refuse to go into it all at once.” 34 Dr. Brooks Emeny characterized the bill as “definitely a step in the direction of war,” and stated that he would oppose the bill “until it has become apparent that the American people are fully aware that the probabilities are that the bill as proposed is not a measure short of war.” 35

Insofar as the central issue at stake in the Lend-Lease Bill was concerned—peace or war for the United States—the testi-

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 594 f.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 430.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 320.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 320.

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mony before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations practically duplicated that offered to the House Committee, except that the emphasis on the pacific intentions of the bill was, if anything, more positive in tone. What Secretary Hull said to the Senate Committee at a secret hearing remains unknown, but at the public hearing he offered the statement he had presented to the House Committee.³⁶

When asked at the House hearings whether the bill, if passed, was likely to get the country into the war, Secretary Hull said that for a long time he had agreed with countries that relied primarily on neutrality as a way of keeping out of trouble, but as things developed he had reached the conclusion that “the surest way to keep out of trouble [is] to prevent an invasion of this hemisphere. . . . I think that is the safest course. I want you to know that in my view there is danger in any direction.”³⁷ In short, Secretary Hull refused to accept the view that the bill marked a sure step on the road to war; while granting that there was danger in any course, he repeatedly emphasized defense of the United States in this hemisphere.

The Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, stated to the Senate Committee that through the Lend-Lease Bill the United States was buying time to prepare for its own security and buying this time from “the only nation that can sell it,” Great Britain. Yet, in response to a question from Senator LaFollette about the possibility of getting into war, Secretary Stimson said: “As Secretary of War, I became a subordinate of the President and was directed to follow out his policies, and those policies, as I understand them, have always been, as shown by many, many occasions, a desire, if possible—if possible—to effect the safety of this country without becoming involved in any warlike or forcible or military measures. Now, so long as I remain his Secretary of War I shall endeavor loyally to follow out his policies. . . .” Still later Senator Duggan remarked:

36. Hearings before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Lend-Lease Bill, 1941, Part i, pp. 3 ff.

37. Hearings before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 1941, pp. 12-13.

to Mr. Stimson: "So that this is a method toward the peace of this country and not a step toward getting this country into war?" Mr. Stimson replied: . . . it is about the last call for lunch on that kind of procedure. This is an effort to do just as you say—to carry out, by nonviolent methods, the protection of our own country through aid to Great Britain. It may be the last." 38

The testimony of Secretary Knox was plainly and indisputably in favor of neutrality, peace, and keeping out of the European war. In 1940 Mr. Knox had declared: "With the wisdom that comes from experience, we know that the phrases, 'a war to preserve democracy,' or 'a war to end all wars' were afterthoughts—rhetorical incitements to our war spirit. We will not fall for this form of incitement so readily again. . . . We must keep out of this war. . . . We must keep out. It finds expression in the columns of the newspapers, on the air, and from the rostrum. This cry knows no partisanship." 39

In his testimony before the Senate Committee on July 10, 1940, when ratification of his appointment as Secretary of the Navy in President Roosevelt's Administration was under consideration, Mr. Knox had declared that he "would not favor sending any of our boys to Europe under any circumstances in the present crisis." Mr. Knox added that "my position has consistently been from the first that we ought to aid them [Great Britain and her allies] in a moral and economic way, never in manpower." Asked whether, if the moral and economic way was not sufficient for them to win, he "would feel that we should go the rest of the way," Mr. Knox had said simply, "No." The questioner had repeated: "You do not?" Mr. Knox had again replied: "No." 40

When on January 31, 1941, Mr. Knox, as Secretary of the Navy came before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to support the Lend-Lease Bill, he testified that his mind had not changed with respect to keeping "our sons out of the

38. Hearings before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Lend-Lease Bill, 1941. Part i. nn. ni. 125.

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European war.” He said that we should have to fight in case the vital interests of the United States were at stake, but that “this I conceive to be the only way that we can preserve ourselves from that necessity—to help Britain. That is the only way that I can see to save our boys from going to war.”⁴¹

Although Secretary Morgenthau declined to comment on the proposition that it might be necessary to go beyond financial and material aid to Great Britain, he stated at one point in the Senate hearings: “My chief interest in this bill is to gain us time to get ready so that we will be strong enough so that nobody would dare jump on us. The best way I know to gain time is to keep England fighting. Now, I am interested in our own security, first, last, and foremost.” At another point in the Senate hearings, this colloquy occurred:

Sen a t o r J o h n s o n o f C a l i f o r n i a . Now there is just one thing that I want, and that is to keep this country out of war.

Sec r e t a r y M o r g e n t h a u . You and me both.

Sen a t o r J o h n s o n Do you, too?

Sec r e t a r y M o r g e n t h a u . Most fervently.

Sen a t o r J o h n s o n Well, I will shake hands across the table, because there are a great many people in this audience and in this city and in this country at present who want nothing better than to stick us into some war and with all of its bloody consequences.

Sec r e t a r y M o r g e n t h a u . No ; it is my most fervent prayer that

we stay at peace.

S e n a t o r J o h n s o n Well, we will stay ball together.⁴²

None of the Administration’s officials who spoke for the Lend-Lease Bill at the committee hearings of the House or Senate and none of the private citizens who favored it took the position that the bill was intended to be an act of war or a deliberate step on the road to war. A few supporting speakers at the hearings admitted that actions under it might eventuate in war or that, if it proved to be insufficient to save Great Britain, war might follow. But as against opponents of the bill

41. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 73, also pp. 49, 67-68.

who repeatedly called it an act of war or an act leading to war, advocates of the measure usually went on record to the contrary. To summarize hundreds of passages in a single formula justified by the expressions used, the Administration's case for the bill was this: It is a law that will provide additional security for the United States and keep the country out of war or at all events it is the best hope of security and noninvolvement for the United States.

It is impossible to discover by a minute examination of the questions they asked and the statements they made during the hearings just what the majority of the Democratic Senators who supported the Lend-Lease Bill actually thought of its nature or of the consequences that would flow from the actions taken by President Roosevelt in carrying out the powers granted to him. Did they regard it as primarily a peace measure? Did they think that the risks of war, which some of them admitted, were so slight as to be negligible?

In respect of such questions some of the Democratic Senators openly expressed definite opinions. For example, Senator Walter George, chairman of the Senate Committee, used precise language when he said to General Robert Wood, National Chairman of the America First Committee: "I can assure you that I no more want to see this country in war than you do, and I agree with your statement that the vast majority of our people do not want to go to war, and so long as they keep that state of mind we will not go to war." 43

On the other hand, it is not clear just what conception of the business in hand Senator Alben Barkley had in mind, for instance, when he questioned Dr. James B. Conant, president of Harvard University, who had earlier declared that "this is in essence a religious war—a war to my mind between good and evil." When his turn came to examine the witness, Senator Barkley asked:

Dr. Conant, while it is true so far as I am able to recall historically there has never been precisely the same situation existing in the world during any war or at the conclusion of any war which

43. *Washington Post*, 1941.

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now exists in Europe and throughout the world, looking at the matter from a historical standpoint, do you recall any incident or any occasion in history when there has been a just negotiated peace as a result of overwhelming conquest by either side in a war having conquest or any other particular purpose as its basis?

Evidently somewhat puzzled by the Senator's inquiry,
Dr.

Conant replied:

I think those words are very difficult to define, Senator, and my knowledge of history is by no means competent to handle that in the broad range of affairs. But I have the distinct impression that if you and I had been living, let us say, in England, in the eighteen hundreds, the defeat of Napoleon, while I do not think it is of the order of magnitude as the present struggle, would have eventuated in a much better peace, from the point of view of England and [than] the success of Napoleon.

Pursuing this line, Senator Barkley then inquired whether Germany had not imposed peace on France in 1871 and whether that did not usually happen when there was a one sided victory in war. Dr. Conant replied in the affirmative and Senator Barkley thereupon closed the colloquy.⁴⁴

Opponents of the Lend-Lease Bill who appeared before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations likewise duplicated the general argument against the proposal that had been advanced before the House Committee. Their case may be concisely stated as follows: This is a war measure; it will confer upon the President practically unlimited power to wage undeclared wars wherever and whenever he chooses; it will inevitably lead the country into another world war on a

**THE LEND-LEASE BILL EXPOUNDED IN CONGRESS AS A MEASURE
FOR DEFENSE AND PEACE**

During the debates in the House of Representatives and the Senate, supporters of the Lend-Lease Bill repeatedly based

44. *Ibid.*, Part 3, pp. 835, 844 f.

their case on the ground that it was a measure calculated to provide defense and peace for the United States. Several speakers admitted that there were risks of war in such action; and the proposition was given many turns and qualifications; but the following extracts from the debates on the bill at various stages indicate the general nature of the argument on this side.

Representative John W. McCormack, Democrat of Massachusetts:

The present bill is a peace measure for our people. It is based on the necessity for our own self-defense, and our country has a right—and it is our duty to do so when danger exists—to provide for our self-defense, international law to the contrary notwithstanding. The real warmongers are those who oppose action, and in their blind opposition are attempting to divide our people. This is no time for division. This is the time for unity. Division at this time will result in harm. It might result in destruction. . . .

Suppose, in the papers of tomorrow or later on, the people of America should read of the defeat of Britain, what do you suppose will be their feeling? Will it be one of calmness, of safety and security, or will it be one of alarm, one with the feeling of fear, or impending danger? Would not their feelings be properly summed up in the words “we are next?” That is the reason why this is a defense measure and a peace measure so that “we will not be next.”

It is amazing to me how many people think in terms of keeping our country out of war. Every one of us by nature and at heart is a pacifist. I do not want to resort to violence. . . . We do not want trouble. We do not want war. Our inclination is to run away, to do everything we can to avert it. But sometimes the law of self preservation stares us in the face as individuals and the same law of preservation at times stares a nation in the face. In the face of a greater danger—destruction in all probability—we are compelled then to react in a contrary direction to what our natural instincts prompt us to do. That is why there are two aspects involved, one of which is to keep our country out of war—that is the easiest thing we have to do. All we have to do is nothing, but if we do nothing, does your judgment tell you that we are keeping war

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from our shores later? In order to keep our country out of war, as I see it, in the face of the imminent danger that confronts us, to prevent that danger from becoming actual we have to take affirmative steps of some kind to prevent the war later coming to our shores.

The purpose of the pending bill is to keep our country out of war, and to keep war from coming to our shores later on. That can only be done by preventing an Axis victory. It is unfortunate that the present world situation exists that requires us to consider legislation of this kind. That condition was not brought about by us, but it exists just the same. . . .

The argument has also been advanced that this bill will lead us into war. I cannot agree with that view. It is my opinion that this bill is the safest course that we can take to keep us out of war and to lessen the chances of war coming to our shores later on.

No matter what course we take, inaction or action as proposed in the pending bill, certain risks are involved. The question in this respect is whether by inaction we take a greater risk than we will take by proper judgment and action that we deem necessary for our welfare. . . .4S

Representative Luther Johnson, Democrat of Texas:

Of course, no one can tell whether or not we are going to be involved in war in the future. In this changing world, with conditions changing overnight, it is a mere guess as to what will or will not happen.

I assert that there is nothing in this bill by which Congress surrenders its war-making powers. . . .

I am as much opposed to war as any opponent of this bill, but we are dealing with realities. . . . Hitler, as head of the Axis Powers, will likely declare war whenever in his judgment it is best for him to do so, and nothing that we have done in the past, or what we propose to do under this bill, will affect his decision. . . . In my judgment, there is nothing in this bill which will hasten or accentuate our involvement in war. . . .

This bill will do what is needed now by England, and we say it is a peace measure. Why? Because if England falls we know that we will likely be involved in war both from the

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Pacific, but if this bill passes and England stands, which God grant that she may, and I believe she will, then there is no danger of invasion here, because as long as the Atlantic Ocean is controlled by the British Fleet, I think our Navy can take care of the other side, and we are in no danger. . . ,46

Representative Anton F. Maciejewski, Democrat of Illinois:

The lend-lease bill seeks to insure us against involvement in the wars now taking place in foreign lands by authorizing the President to give material aid to those friendly nations whose continued independent existence is necessary for our vital defense.⁴⁷

Representative James P. Richards, Democrat of South Carolina:

Mr. Chairman, I do not guarantee, I do not even assert that this bill will keep us out of war. God grant that it may. I do believe that taking this step to forge another link in the proper defenses of the United States will have a tendency to keep us out of war. I do not know what the future will reveal. I do not know what legislation we shall be called upon to enact in behalf of the defense of our beloved country, I do not know where or when our boys may be called to go in defense of the Nation. Some have said our frontier is the Rhine. I do not agree with that. . . . It is, however, my humble opinion, my sincere belief, that the first defense lines of the United States are today anywhere on this earth where occasion requires that we exert our influence or where we should place our feet, or where we should shed our blood in defense of this country, the only remaining great free democracy left on the face of the earth.⁴⁸

Representative Malcolm Tarver, Democrat of Georgia:

I am . . . in favor of aid to England, every ounce of aid we can furnish short of sending our own boys to European battle fields. . . . I do not want to tie up that aid with hampering restrictions. If we are going to help Britain at all, let us make our aid effective and let the world know that we

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war or not. Nobody knows. I believe there is a chance it may . . . The surest way of “keeping war out of America” is to aid Great Britain, without stint, to the fullest extent of our resources. If we deny aid to Great Britain it is possible that the Axis Powers will prevail. Then will come the real test for America. Aid for Britain is our strongest insurance against actual warfare.⁴⁹

Representative E. V. Izak, Democrat of California:

I predict if this bill is not passed you will see a negotiated peace, which in no way will curb the onward march of Hitler and the totalitarian nations. . . .

They say it may mean war. My friends, you cannot tell, and I cannot tell, whether the passage of this bill means war or peace. We do not know. But I want to say that it is not in your power, and it is not in mine, to prevent war. I lost all patience with my people when they came to me during the last campaign and said: “Please don’t get us into war.” I said, “Don’t look at me. I am not getting you into war, but there is one man who has the power to do that, and that is Mr. Hitler. Look at him.” ⁵⁰

Representative Stephen Young, Democrat of Ohio:

I am determined to do my utmost to keep war 3,000 miles distant from our shores. Let us strengthen, not weaken the hands of the Commander in Chief of our Army and Navy so that no dictators will dare attack us.⁵¹

Representative John Dingell, Democrat of Michigan:

. . . The bill will permit counter moves to circumvent German and Japanese threats whenever they may appear to menace our American rights and interests, whether in China, in Europe, or in the Western Hemisphere. The bill will save the lives of American boys and girls. . . .

If we are to stand by our oft-repeated declarations of policy, if

we are to defend the flag as long as it waves over the Philippines, if we are to protect our vital far eastern trade routes, our missions, and our rights, then we must be prepared for any eventuality. The yellow peril of the Pacific,

German cohesion and phobia, each day threatens America with ever-increasing boldness. . . . Japan will not fight the United States only because she cannot do so successfully at this time. She will attempt to gain every advantage she can, and we must act in concert with Great Britain and Holland to stop her in her tracks; there is no time to lose. Not a shot will be fired, not a single life will be lost if we act with determination and promptness, if with courage, we act now.⁵²

Representative W. R. Poage, Democrat of Texas:

Let it not be said that we were unwilling to use American money and American munitions now as a means of saving American lives later on. Let us pass H.R. 1776 as the only effective method of protecting the liberty we gained in the year 1776, and of preserving the peace that we enjoy in 1941.⁵⁸

Senator Alben Barkley, Democrat of Kentucky:

I do not pretend that there are not risks, no matter what we do or fail to do. It may be a choice of risks. If we do nothing, we run the risk of being hemmed in and fenced off as a sort of unilateral concentration camp. We run the risk of seeing the rest of the world overrun, and then being compelled to fight a hostile world or be overrun ourselves.

On the other hand, if we take action which is contemplated in the legislation now before us, while that course is not free from risks, the chances are that the foul aggressor, who now boasts that he has his eyes upon us, may be stopped in his tracks. . . . This measure is not based on any design on our part to attempt to secure a contract in advance as to what the terms of peace shall be. This would be a manifest impossibility. The basis of this bill is our own national defense, and that defense is to be accomplished by affording aid to those who are attempting to stop this international marauder in the hope that we may never have to undergo the vandalism which his victims are undergoing today in Europe. You might with equal propriety ask a peaceful citizen who is under the heel of a highwayman with a knife at his throat what use he will make of his life if you help him to preserve it.

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This measure does not surrender the right of Congress to
de
clare war. . . .

This measure does not confer upon the President the right
to
convoy ships across the ocean.

It does not confer upon him the right to send American
troops to
Europe. . . .

We do not want war. We hate war. Most of us here have
seen the ravages of war, and we have seen the devastation
and the suffering which it has always entailed. We do not
want these ravages and this suffering to come to our shores.
We believe that this measure offers the surest method by
which we can avoid participation actively in this war and at
the same time help those nations which are heroically grappling
with a universal enemy and to preserve the doctrines of our
fathers and the aspirations of our own hearts.

. . . The course which we chart is not without risk. Our
liberties were not won in the first instance without risk. Our
glorious history as a nation has not been written in golden
letters upon the immortal page without risk of life or property
or safety.

Are we less willing to assume those risks than were our fore
fathers? Are we cowed into submission by the fear of sacrifice or
physical discomfort? Are we content to see others give up life
and limb and home and comfort and peace itself while we fear to
give even a portion of the wealth with which a generous God has
blessed us? 54

Senator Claude Pepper, Democrat of Florida:

We have had to come to the decision that one or the other
shall live, totalitarianism or democracy, tyranny or freedom, and
that it is as impossible for the two to live in the same world as it
is for darkness and light to inhabit the same space at the same
time. One of them must be crushed and the other live triumphant,
and there can be no peace, and there will be no peace, until
Hitlerism is crushed . . .

It is asked, "Why do you not declare war on him?" The

this fails many months will not pass before we will be making a decision very much more fateful than that we make now as to the destiny of the people and the sons of America.

Mr. President, I venture to lay down the statement that not the American Congress, but the American people, will not let England fall, and whether we like it or not, let England totter, and they will drive us into action under the lash of their demands. Call it war or do not call it war—lay it down as a premise, America will not let England fall to Hitler. If the action now proposed will not save England, we will save it anyway. Watch American opinion, and see if what I say is not true.

Those who are trying to save us from having to make that terrible decision—which God forbid we shall ever have to make—have offered this alternative which contains some hope of success. Our Army leader, our Commander in Chief, our Secretary of the Navy, our Secretary of War, the Chief of our General Staff, tell us it will save England, and by saving England will save us from a horrible decision between peace and war. I favor trying it, therefore, and on bended knee, praying that it will save us from war. . . .

I said a moment ago, and I say now, that those who offer this bill are trying to keep a brave country, a people who love life, from ever having to decide whether they will give up their peace, or whether they will give up the means of preserving their security.⁵⁵

Senator Tom Connally, Democrat of Texas:

This bill, I submit, is not intended to get the Nation into war, but it is intended to keep it out of war. It is the purpose of the bill by aiding Great Britain and by giving succor, aid and assistance to those who are struggling against the aggressors, to keep the war in Europe, and keep the invaders away from our own land.

If Britain, without our assistance, cannot resist the tide of aggression, we might as well prepare for an endless struggle over the years, because if Britain is defeated and overwhelmed, and if her navy is conquered, just so surely as the earth circles around the sun, sooner or later the

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Mr. President, when the Colonies gained their independence and established the United States of America, and later when the Monroe Doctrine was proclaimed, there was created a great zone of the earth's surface known as the Western Hemisphere, dedicated to free governments and democratic institutions. The purpose of this bill is to make secure forever that hemisphere as a sanctuary of freedom into which no alien conqueror shall ever set his accursed footsteps.

... The cold-blooded dictators, intoxicated by conquest ... await only the moment of their choice to strike down free government and democracy wherever it lives. This bill is America's answer to their challenge. We propose to keep the war away from our shores. We propose to preserve our own freedom and that of the western world.⁵⁶

Senator J. W. Bailey, Democrat of North Carolina:

The American people, with every opportunity to decide and to protest, have given assurance that they desire that their country, for their sakes, shall resist the totalitarian powers with material aid to Britain and other nations.

It becomes me to say that in following this course we may not win. We cannot have any assurance of victory in the fortunes of war; but on the other hand, in this course lies the only hope of escaping war, and our best hope of escaping what is worse—defeat in war! ...

Some say what is proposed by the bill is intervention. It is. I think that is what my friend, the senior Senator from Montana, wishes me to say. It is intervention. It is not neutrality. It is the reversal of the policy which we laid down in the neutrality act.

... It is intervention. We may not regard it as war, and intervention is not necessarily war. There is a difference between intervening and being an armed belligerent. ...

I am hoping that intervention may not mean war, but I am ready if intervention does mean war ... I am not holding back. I abhor the idea of war. I am not one of those who will hold out the flattering hope that we can fight a war of limited liability. I think it might be well for Mr. Hitler and Mr.

left that will not stop short once the gage of battle is thrown down—not short of the last dollar and the last man. . . .

It is said that the passage of the bill will lead to war. I do not know whether it will or not. I think those who predict that it will lead to war are in a pretty safe position, because there is a great deal of probability that war is coming, either course we take, and, when it comes, those who say it will come on account of this proposed act will say, “Now it has come on account of the act.” Those who take the affirmative have to take the responsibility for events. The man who takes the opposition side is always in a fortunate position; he is not responsible for anything; he can always say, “I did not advocate it.” I question whether the passage of the pending bill will lead to war, and I say its object is to head off war. We hope to enable England to win the fight with ships and men and planes, and what is more, up to now it is a war which so far as England and Germany are concerned, is not dependent upon the foot soldier. I agree again that, in the last analysis, the foot soldier cannot be dispensed with; he cleans up and he occupies, but, so far, this is a war of air and of sea and a war of diplomacy and of morale.⁵⁷

Senator James E. Murray, Democrat of Montana:

Mr. President, this bill, as I see it, relates solely to the defense of our country and defines the policies which will guide us in a war-mad world. I can see no design in it to drag the United States into war. Regardless of the provisions of the measure, there is no way that we can get into this war unless we deliberately decide to enter it, and that can be accomplished only by a declaration of war. We are justified, in our own defense, to protect our country from the threat of the tri-partite agreement of the dictators representing Germany, Italy and Japan. We are, therefore, entitled to contribute aid to England and thus block the Axis scheme to dominate the world.

. . . I think the pending measure is a sound solution of our defense problems. By stopping the war in Europe we shall keep it out of America. It is the judgment of the great majority of this body that it offers the best chance of avoiding

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United States because, as I have pointed out, the successful defense of England, the strengthening of her air forces, and the awakening of the democratic spirit of the world will start a chain of events that will accomplish the ultimate defeat of Hitler. . . . We are seeking here only to protect the interests of the United States and save our people from the dangerous consequences of totalitarianism. The measure declares a sound American policy. It creates no dictatorship and it does not involve us in war. I have full faith in the pledge of the President of the United States to keep us out of war.⁵⁸

Senator A. B. Chandler, Democrat of Kentucky:

I do not think any of us know that our efforts will be short of war. I think all of us hope they will be. But as between sending

\$2,000,000,000 worth of aid to Britain, which will be short of war, and may result in a British defeat, and may result in the future in our becoming involved and having a great deal more trouble, and doing what is proposed to be done under the pending measure, I prefer that we pass the bill and give the President authority to give Britain all-out aid, so that she will have a chance to win.

Mr. McCarran. And thereby create the avenue for trouble? Is that what the Senator means?

Mr. Chandler. We are faced with the proposal of giving affirmative aid and the possibility of getting into trouble or of doing nothing and facing the possibility of getting into trouble, and between the two I would choose the giving of affirmative aid.⁵⁹

Senator Morris Sheppard, Democrat of Texas:

It is my opinion that this measure enables us to gain the time necessary for the development of our own defensive armament. The struggling democracies need aid; we need time . . .

In view of the international situation that confronts us today, time is of the essence in the promotion of our national defense. We cannot afford to wait until the aggressor has accomplished his purpose or started his advance into new

which the President may consider to be fighting the cause of democracy in a way vital to our own interest must be rendered as speedily as possible. . . . We are threatened with pagan barbarism, the rule of the sword, the denial of individual liberty. We are threatened with tyranny, oppression, persecution, and economic enslavement.

The measure before us enables us still to stop this threat with
out the necessity of war on our part . . .

. . . Because, therefore, this measure purposes to aid the nations now opposing aggressors and to provide for our own future needs through the stimulation of our defense industries, and, above all, because it is an act to promote the defense of the United States and may save us from war, it is my opinion that it should pass.00

Senator Scott Lucas, Democrat of Illinois:

No, Mr. President, I repeat that H.R. 1776 is a peace measure and not one of war. I submit it is a step in the direction of peace, and if I thought for one moment that it was a step toward war, I would be standing here opposing it with all the power and force
that I command. . . .

We who support this bill are the real guardians of the peace. We are the realistic, hard-boiled avoiders of war. We advocate

**BILL. LEND-LEASE BILL ATTACKED IN CONGRESS AS A WAR
MEASURE**

Rejecting the bill, either in its original or amended form, as
a design for peace and defense, opponents were equally firm
in
denouncing it as a war measure.

Representative Thomas A. Jenkins, Republican of Ohio:

From the speech of the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr.
McCormack, I have been strengthened in my belief that there
is

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something in connection with this bill that has not yet been brought out. At first we were given to understand that this bill was drafted as the free handiwork of Congress. That is not true. This bill has been cautiously and clandestinely put together. Ostensibly the physical drafting of it was done by a group of Congressmen, but its genius was in the heart and mind of someone aside from the active membership of Congress. Its genius comes from those who want the United States of America involved in this world conflict. There are powerful influences in the United States of America that would not stop in their determination to involve us in war, regardless of how dire the consequences might be. The cry of American mothers against another war that would rob them of their sons is not heard by this group. The prospect of the loss of lives and the loss of property and the bankruptcy of the Nation do not deter this group. They want Hitler destroyed for a different reason than what most of us have for his destruction. That this bill had all been thought out is proven by the President's message to Congress delivered on the sixth of January. ... In this message he said that he would be compelled to ask Congress for money and materials that he might transfer them to the belligerents in this war. Through all these debates and through all these hearings I have been seeking to locate the real genius of this bill. Can it be the insatiable ambition of the President to want to have a hand in the domination of the world? Can it be in moneyed influences against whom Hitler has committed some special act which they resent? Or can it be as the result of fear of world domination from Hitler and his followers? I must confess that I do not know the answer, but I have a strong conviction that, as I have already stated, this bill has behind it and back of it some motives the purposes of which have not yet been disclosed. ... There are some who think that the President wants this bill so that he may then be able to take from Great Britain, or at least to share with Great Britain, the active management of the war. If the President could, under threat of withholding money and supplies, demand that the war be carried on along its main lines, he would be in a position to have his demands recognized. If he assumes a position of collaboration and co-generalship with the war leaders of Great Britain we are then actively in the war.⁶²

Representative Bartel Jonkman, Republican of Michigan:

Mr. Chairman, we do not know and we cannot know where we are going under this bill, and we cannot know what situation we will be in when we get there. This bill not only undertakes to bring order out of chaos in Europe, including the Russia, Poland and Latvia tangle, but its objective is to set the whole world in order for our own defense and safety . . . this will mean war, bankruptcy, dictatorship, and, I may add, failure.⁶³

Representative Usher Burdick, Republican of North Dakota:

All-out aid to Britain may mean anything. To sell her supplies is one thing—that we are doing now— . . . To sell her supplies and convoy them to England is another thing; to have these convoys sunk by German submarines and mines is another thing; to have actual war is the last thing. But the first thing and the last thing are in close proximity—the last thing is inevitable from the first thing. This means, therefore, if we grant these dictatorial powers to the President war is inevitable. A war for what? The last war was fought “to make the world safe for democracy.” Did it make it safe? Is democracy safe now anywhere in the world, even including our own country? What will we enter this war for? ⁶⁴

Representative Hugh Peterson, Democrat of Georgia:

This is no defense measure.

It is a measure of aggressive warfare.

If it is enacted into law and its provisions are really made effective the inevitable result will be the sending of the armed forces of this nation—the sons of this Republic—to stand guard or do battle even unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Only a miracle could save us from such a sad fate. And no one can predict what the final outcome would be.

One of my prime purposes in making these remarks here today is to warn my constituents as well as all the people of this Republic as to the consequences which they must expect from the passage of this measure. I predict that with its passage the armed forces of

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this Republic will be marching into actual battle before any other

more formal declaration of war is made by Congress. . . .

This legislation, cloaked in the robes of peace, is in its naked

form a cowardly declaration of war.

It is clear to me that there are those who know that the American people do not want to go to war. They know that the American people do not want their sons to die on the far-flung battlefields of Europe and Asia and Africa for the cause of world empire. So with shrewdly designed legislation such as this they pose as angels of peace even as they swiftly drag us down the dark and bloody pathway of warfare and destruction.⁶⁵

Representative James O'Connor, Democrat of Montana:

I want to say this also: that the mandate we received from the American people, including the President of the United States, was to keep this country out of war. Stimson and Knox did not run for office. They did not receive a mandate. .

... I gather from this legislation that supply ships will be convoyed to Europe in some fashion to get supplies there. That will start the shooting, President Roosevelt said, and when the shooting starts the Congress can say nothing more. Therefore, this may be the last time we will have a chance to go on record in this House to get this country into war or keep it out of war. My considered judgment is that this bill, if enacted into law, will lay the foundation for our entry, and that when England calls for convoys and troops she will get them.

... I cannot and will not by my vote pass a bill that, to me, ignores the will of the American people, namely; to keep us out of this war—that puts this nation on the brink of disaster such as was never known.⁶⁸

Representative Melvin Maas, Republican of Minnesota:

To aid Great Britain by permitting her to purchase war supplies here is one thing; but for the United States Government, as such, to actually furnish those supplies is to

Representative Richard Gale, Republican of Minnesota:

Without question the people of the United States are sympathetic toward England and sincerely would like to see Hitler defeated, but let us not confuse "sympathy" with a desire to sacrifice untold wealth, personal liberty, and priceless lives in a long, bitter war.

H.R. 1776, if passed, may be the declaration of such a war and probably the only declaration that Congress will be called upon to make. Stripped of high-sounding phrases, of timid misconception, stripped of reluctance to face the truth, the issue before the country is not merely the lend-lease bill but whether we shall have war.⁶⁸

Representative Martin Sweeney, Republican of Ohio:

I have a mandate from the voters of the Twentieth Congressional District of Ohio ... to vote against this vicious war involving measure known as H.R. 1776. . . .

We now predict that the lend-lease, give-away measure would invest in the Chief Executive the power to involve us in actual participation in the war. ... I care not how sincere or patriotic any President of the United States may be, such power must be kept within the Congress. We are actually in the war once this bill is passed.⁶⁹

Representative Dewey Short, Republican of Missouri:

There is one question I believe every member of this body should ask himself before he votes for this bill. Am I willing to go the whole way? You cannot be half way in war and half way out of war. You cannot insult people, spit in their faces, slap their jaws, kick them on the shins and then say "we do not want to fight." There is no such thing as what is expressed by that sham slogan of "methods short of war. . . ."

. . . You can dress this measure up all you please, you can sprinkle it with perfume and pour powder on it, masquerade it in any form you please with these innocuous and meaningless amendments that have been offered, but it is still foul and it stinks to high heaven. It does not need a doctor, it needs an undertaker. We do

68. *Ibid.*, p. 568.

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take not one or two but several other steps nearer the brink, nearer the precipice of active involvement, and if you cannot kill this bill, then I would like to see you offer an amendment that the Members who vote for this vicious thing will, the day war is declared or we become involved, resign their seats and go in the front contingent. That of course will never happen.

This bill is a war bill, it is a dictatorship bill, and it is a bank
ruptcy bill. . . .TM

Representative Clifford Hope, Republican of Kansas:

The American people have a right to express their opinions, and Members of Congress the right to vote their convictions as to whether or not we become a belligerent. The present bill will put us in the war in the end just as surely as if Congress had voted a declaration of war. We will be in for all purposes and to the finish. We will be in without any vote in Congress on the question and without the great majority of our people having any idea that this momentous step has been taken.⁷¹

Representative Philip Bennett, Republican of Missouri:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, if we want to help the oppressed let us do it in compliance with our Constitution and international laws. Let us do it short of war, which phrase is ominously missing from recent utterances of the President. The conclusion is inescapable that the President is reconciled to active military intervention if such intervention is needed to defeat the Axis in this war.

“But our boys are not going to be sent abroad,” says the
Presi
dent. . . .

Nonsense, Mr. Chairman; even now their berths are being built on transport ships.

Even now tags for identification of the dead and wounded are being printed by the William C. Ballantyne Co., of Washington. 72

Representative George H. Tinkham, Republican of Massachusetts:

Mr. Chairman, the bill now under discussion, with its delegation of limitless powers to the President to intervene in

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in the world with all the resources of the United States, is a war bill of monstrous implications. The passage of this bill means the adoption by the United States of a policy of unrestrained, brutal, naked power policies for the domination of the world. This policy is imperialism gone mad. . . .

The politicians in Washington in their misleading and mendacious representations of policies and purposes are being as false to the American people as the French politicians recently were false to the French people. The consequences will be as disastrous. It is patently disloyal to the American people to involve them in war against their will, and that is precisely what the enactment of the bill H.R. 1776 will do. The bill does not empower the President to declare war, but it does empower him to make war. In these days, war is seldom formally declared. . . .

The United States will unquestionably become actively engaged in war if this bill is enacted.⁷³

Representative H. Carl Anderson, Republican of Minnesota:

Our job as Congressmen is to prevent a recurrence of our troops again being used abroad. Yes; we will always protect our own, but I cannot but feel that H.R. 1776, backed up by the glaring headlines of the warminded eastern press and the propaganda ground out in the movies, owned in large part by the same group who dominate this press; I cannot but feel that all of this, together with the wrapping of our flag about this so-called lend-lease bill, is but a prelude once more to brass bands again accompanying our brothers and perhaps our sons on a march to a war of destruction in a foreign country, a war which we had no part in starting. No; neither were we consulted with by Britain at Versailles nor at Munich. I sympathize with the poor people in Europe today, . . . but the clammy, cold hand of death accompanies the convoying by our warships of supplies going to their aid.⁷⁴

Representative Gerald Landis, Republican of Indiana:

I believe a majority of our people who are advocating aid short

of war do not desire us to enter the war. We are being edged

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the war without the masses' knowledge. The course we are pursuing is bound to involve us in war. If we aid Britain short of war and beyond the limits of the Neutrality Act, it ultimately means war.⁷⁵

Representative Vito Marcantonio, American Labor party of New York:

Mr. Chairman, I am opposed to this bill because I am opposed to converting this country into an arsenal, not an arsenal for democracy, if you please, but an arsenal in pursuance of a policy which would catapult the American people into a war which is not a war for democracy but a war for the maintenance of the present British imperialist interests, a war between two gangs of imperialistic bandits, one gang who stole yesterday and one gang who is trying to steal today.

You who are asking us to follow a policy which will inevitably plunge us into actual conflict, not plunge us into war, because we are in that war from the standpoint of armaments—from the standpoint of having put our country on a war-economy basis we are actually in war—you are asking us to go further into that war, and inevitably, for now that you have become this arsenal and this military reservoir, you are bound to engage in actual conflict. . . .

. . . The great question is, what is short of war? Who knows what short of war is? I think short of war means that we should stay home here, attend to our own business, and stay out of Europe. That is my idea of short of war. . . . I say now before Almighty God and this Congress that I am going to do everything to keep America out of war. I promise that. I do not care what the people in my district think. If I received a telegram tomorrow from everybody in my district wanting me to vote for this bill, I would resign my job in Congress before I would vote for it. I would not do it, because this bill is going to lead the American people into war. . . .

. . . it is my belief that this bill will lead us into war and will cause us the greatest anxiety and trouble this country has ever had. I am sure the only way we can keep out of war is to defeat this bill.⁷⁸

Senator Bennett Clark, Democrat of Missouri:

This is not a defense bill; it is a war bill. We pledge ourselves to assuring, guaranteeing military victory of one belligerent over another. We all know that we will have to follow that up by any means that may be necessary. We all know that that is equivalent to a declaration of a state of war ourselves, and must be followed up by sending our warships, our planes, our guns, and, ultimately, the men, the boys of this country of the coming generation who are the hope and heart of the future of the United States, across the seas. Once committed, Mr. President, we cannot turn aside. . . .

Mr. President, we are facing a situation in which, if we pass this bill, we are taking certainly the next to the last step leading to our involvement in war. It may be that we are taking the last step, because under the powers given in this bill steps may be taken which will create a state of war.⁷⁷

Senator Pat McCarran, Democrat of Nevada:

If this bill is enacted into law, Mr. President, it is war—war under the ignominious circumstance of never having been declared by the Congress of the United States.

First of all, this is the President's bill. The present President of the United States gave his O.K.—to use the common vernacular of the street—to the bill. What does he want, and what do we yield?

First of all, he wants and we yield power in his own discretion, on his own terms, and as he may see fit, to conduct undeclared war anywhere in the world. . . .

I say we are weakening the Executive Office when we grant that power. We make the Executive Office a mere messenger boy for carrying on war abroad.⁷⁸

Senator Burton K. Wheeler, Democrat of Montana:

Actually once we are committed to the course laid out by this bill, the die is cast.

The momentum forcing us along the primrose path to our fatal rendezvous with war will dictate sheeplike approval of each ap-

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propriation requested and meekly obedient extension of the time limit, just as Hitler's powers and Mussolini's powers were extended by the docile representatives of the people. . . .

Are we again to be just marionettes to dance when our ruler pulls the strings, just Charlie McCarthys to utter words that the ruler puts in our mouths? . . .

There is no fairer test of democracy than the right of the people, through their chosen representatives, to determine between peace and war. This is the issue which, above all other issues, is important to them. More than any other, it has to do with their inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

We may talk about the right of free assemblage and the right of free speech, but the most important thing to a people anywhere is the question whether or not they shall be dragged into war. The choice between sending millions of their boys to be killed and maimed, and keeping them at home to engage in productive employment, contributing to the happiness and wealth of the

country . . . the choice between terrible total war with its ravages on women and little children, and the blessings of peace — this choice belongs to them. The loosing of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse should not depend on the whim or caprice of any one man, be he wise and good, or vindictive and power crazy. 'War's a game that were their subjects wise, kings would not play at'

To the extent that the people, through their chosen representatives, have surrendered control over this choice to one man, to that extent they have sacrificed democracy. Oh, I know that in these cases neither people nor ruler can make the choice; there

is a line when they are subjected to unprovoked attack by the invading armed forces of another country. Everyone in his right mind will grant that power must reside in someone to take the

necessary immediate measures to meet and beat back such assaults. Of course everyone else knows that such cases have nothing to do with the underlying premise of H.R. 1776, namely the fantastic claim

that our frontiers are no longer our two seacoasts; that they are

and usurpations charged against the King of Great Britain in our

Declaration of Independence:

“He has affected to render the military independent of, and superior to, the civil power.” 79

Senator David Walsh, Democrat of Massachusetts:

First and foremost, in purpose and effect it gives blanket approval to policies and a course of conduct that I most earnestly and regretfully believe will lead the United States into war in Europe or in Asia, or perhaps both. Indeed, in my judgment, this bill when viewed in the perspective of all the attendant circumstances is an absolute committal of the United States to war as Britain's ally in her life and death struggle with Nazi Germany and Hitler's associated partners and pawns. I say this fully conscious that the proponents of this legislation, when it was first presented to Congress and to the country . . . , loudly proclaimed it a measure to keep the United States out of war. Such a claim is entirely specious. Such a belief is a delusion. The proponents of this legislation, it seems to me, refuse to face the realities of the course which they advocate. If they do face them and perceive them, they have not acquainted the country with the implications.

But it is only fair to say that as public debate and consideration of this legislation have advanced, less is heard of the claim that this is a peace measure. There is now a tacit admission even from many of the proponents that this bill does in fact take us down the road to war.⁸⁰

Senator Arthur Vandenberg, Republican of Michigan:

My greatest fundamental objection to it is that it invites and authorizes the President of the United States to enter the continental arena of “power politics,” which has been the curse of the Old World and the cradle of its incessant wars for a thousand years, invites and authorizes him to become power politician No.

1 of this whole, mad world. . . . I am opposed to any of these policies, Mr. President, which would needlessly threaten to drag us into war, when we are still officially saying that we

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labeled “peace.” I freely concede that our whole status today is precarious, but that is no reason why we should make it more so. Yes; the ice is thin at best. We chose thin ice when we abandoned neutrality. We chose the risk. We have taken the risk ever since

. . . when I speak of policies that would needlessly drag us into war, which is to say, would precipitate us into it, I am not speaking of our international engagements, although I could wish that some great power might keep these lamps trimmed and burning. I certainly am not speaking of threats that may be hurled at us—as in the Axis challenge of last fall—in an effort to coerce us by intimidation. Intimidation acts adversely upon us. I am speaking, rather, of policies which would needlessly be likely to expose us to physical attack which could be met only by armed resistance, thus precipitating war. I find such exposure in this bill. I cannot approve. I repeat that if we are going to war—which God for bid—I would go all the way to war, deliberately conscious of our decision, and not drift in or back in, deliberately pretending to be unconscious of anything but peace in our hearts.⁸¹

Senator C. Wayland Brooks, Republican of Illinois:

This bill is a war bill. It asks for the same powers that would be asked for if we were actually fighting, shooting, marching, defending our own shores . . .

I have heard distinguished Senators on the floor of the Senate talking about crushing Hitler and grinding him into the ground, and I wonder if they have honestly translated to the people of America what this means.

This means arming to the teeth; giving one man complete and full authority to lease, lend, or otherwise dispose of our military resources to engage in every present or possible conflict in the whole world if he believes that it is for the best interests of America to do it. . . .

When this power is voted to one man, I predict today that it will—sooner than we expect—involve us in active, personal fighting participation in war; and you cannot shirk your responsibility by turning over this authority to any one man. The blood of the American boys will be on your hands whether they wear khaki, forest green or navy blue.

Mr. President, this is a war bill, with war powers, with the deliberate intention to becoming involved in other people's wars. . . . We do not need any declaration of war. All we need to do is carry out the intended provisions of this bill and we will be in the wars.⁸²

Senator Robert M. LaFollette, Progressive of Wisconsin:

Mr. President, every Senator who votes for the bill has now been warned what some administration Senators themselves really believe the bill means. It means war. And all America should also know that it means war.

As for myself, I am opposed to our entering the war. I will not give my vote for any bill which is one step nearer another blood bath for our youth, one step nearer totalitarianism for the United States. I am not willing to add my vote to help in any way a course of action which I am convinced can end only in the same bitter disillusionment and futile disaster of the last war.

For the bill means war. Whatever fine trappings it is decked with, it hides the skull and bones of death on Old World battle fields and death on the seven seas. Who will assume to limit where the graveyards of this war will be? . . .

The full implications of this measure are not to be found by reading the bill itself. You judge a man not by one act alone but by the sum total of his acts. So the bill must be judged against the background of other statements by the President, as recently as his radio address to the Nation on December 29, 1940, and his message to Congress on January 6, 1941. The bill is a blank check to permit him to make good the reckless assurances he gave the world when he overdrew on his authority to speak the convictions of the American people. His assurances to the world were: First, the United States will guarantee a smashing victory for the British Empire; and second, the United States is committed to the establishment of the "four freedoms" everywhere in the world.⁸³

Senator Robert A. Taft, Republican of Ohio:

Mr. Taft: The important thing about this bill, it seems to me, is that its provisions in effect give the President power to carry on a kind of undeclared war all over the world, in which American

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would do everything except actually put soldiers in the front-line trenches where the fighting is.

Mr. Wheeler : I think that is true.

Mr. Taft : I do not see how we can long conduct such a war without actually being in the shooting end of the war as well as in the service-of-supply end which this bill justifies.⁸⁴

After prolonged and prolix debates, the Lend-Lease Bill, amended in several respects, was finally passed by large majorities in both houses of Congress. Although there were some defections from party ranks, the main support for the measure came from Democrats, and Republicans supplied by far the major portion of the opposition votes. In the House of Representatives the vote was 260 for and 165 against; in the Senate it was 60 for and 31 against. The bill, entitled "An Act to Promote the Defense of the United States," became a law on March 11, 1941, with the signature of President Roosevelt. Time would tell of its meaning and consequences. Was it in reality an act authorizing the President to wage undeclared wars, as critics alleged, or was the measure, as Senator Tom Connally declared, "intended to keep it [the Nation] out of war"?

CHAPTER III

Patrolling as Appearances

AMONG the many criticisms of the Lend-Lease Bill as it came to Congress in its original form, few were more pointed than the objection that if enacted a next step would be a presidential order instructing the commanders of American naval forces to convoy British and other ships bearing military supplies to the beneficiaries of the act—a step certain to result in shooting, attacks, and war.¹ The original bill (Section 3) was silent on the subject but in response to protests from the opposition Congress amended the section by a provision that nothing in the act should be construed to authorize convoying. Nevertheless, the matter of convoys remained embarrassing for Administration supporters who, out of conviction or expediency, insisted that the Lend-Lease Act was a peace measure or at all events, if involving war risks, was, as Senator Pepper phrased the argument for it, “the only possible way to stay out of war.”² That British shipping was in dire need of protection against German submarines was well known; the transfer of American destroyers to Great Britain in 1940 had advertised the fact to the people of the United States; and news of sea warfare since that action had apparently confirmed it. At the same time it was obvious that if American naval forces convoyed British ships or patrolled the sea lanes for the purpose of warding off German or Italian submarine attacks, a “shooting war” was almost certain to ensue. Thus lend-lease, despite its appearances as a peace measure, might easily become in reality a war measure, as its foes were contending. In such circumstances, advocates of aid to the Allies were hard pressed to find arguments which squarely met the assertion of their opponents that lend-lease meant American convoys and that

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convoys meant sending American boys to fight in Europe and Asia, notwithstanding all the promises to American mothers and fathers in the campaign of 1940.

When a reporter had brought the issue immediately to the attention of President Roosevelt at a press conference during the discussion of the Lend-Lease Bill, by remarking that, according to one suggestion, the Navy might convoy ships into British waters where the British Navy would take them over, the President had dismissed the idea as if beneath consideration.³

The President's supporters in Congress, however, had not been able to dispose of the troublesome issue so easily and to brush off questioners with a laugh. At hearings on the Lend-Lease Bill Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox had been driven into a corner and compelled to say just where he stood in respect of convoying. On that occasion, Mr. Knox had declared that he was very much opposed to the idea of convoying merchantmen across the Atlantic and that he looked upon it as "an act of war."⁴

Of all the controversial issues relative to President Roosevelt's promises to keep the country out of war, the question of using American naval vessels to convoy British or other merchant ships on their way to British waters or elsewhere to war zones was about the hottest that appeared during the days subsequent to the enactment of the Lend-Lease Act, March 11, 1941. Opponents of involvement in war, Democrats and Republicans alike, repeatedly raised it in Congress and outside as the acid test of the President's sincerity, and the sincerity of the Senators and Representatives who had supported that measure in Congress. Amid the disputes over convoying, which raged from March 11 to December, 1941, these opponents of war continued to recite various pledges which had been made by sponsors of the Lend-Lease Bill while it was pending to the effect that convoying would not be undertaken, in particular

3. See above, p. 20.

President Roosevelt's statement that "Convoys mean shooting and shooting means war." 5

On their part, even frank and open advocates of war were for a time in a dilemma with regard to convoying. They knew that Democrats and Republicans in Congress, owing to the peace pledges they had made to their constituents and/or their convictions, would not vote for a declaration of war; and they knew also that convoying was the most effective means likely to edge the country indirectly into war, for convoying would probably bring on shooting and shooting might easily end in a full-fledged war. But owing to continued popular hostility to involvement in war, it was inexpedient for frank and open advocates of war to represent convoying to the public as a way of maneuvering the United States into the armed conflict. For them it was, temporarily "good strategy" to acclaim convoying as merely another device for defending America by aiding the Allies—and advocacy in this guise was among the liberties they enjoyed as citizens.

On the other hand, President Roosevelt, bound by his anti war pledges and his commitment that lend-lease would not be administered as a war policy, was in a different position with reference to convoying, when he began to act under the statute; and, judging by the appearances reflected in official statements from the White House at the time, he claimed no authority under that law to order convoying and he did not contemplate commanding the American Navy to engage in it. On the contrary, he made public statements to the effect that, while he approved lawful "patrolling," he was not intending to use the Navy for convoying. Meanwhile advocates of war or strong action worked hard to stir up public sentiment in favor of convoying as aid to the Allies for the defense of America.

The stages in the development of the controversy over convoying during the second half of March, 1941, are illustrated by the following brief outline of events:

March 15. President Roosevelt, in a radio address, declared

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That he would maintain a bridge of ships to Great Britain and Greece.

March 16. Senator Carter Glass announced that he favored convoys if the President intended to imply in his "bridge-of-ships" speech that this measure was contemplated.

March 17. The Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies announced support for convoys.

March 18. President Roosevelt parried questions on the subject of convoying.

March 19. Representative Sauthoff's amendment to forbid convoying was opposed in the House of Representatives by supporters of the Administration.

March 20. Secretary Knox declared before a Senate Committee that he had no plan for convoys.

March 27. Senator Glass again announced himself in favor of convoys.⁶

At the end of March, a joint resolution to bar resort to convoys came up for consideration in Congress and was used to challenge the sincerity of members who had hitherto declared themselves against convoying. In the House of Representatives, it was sponsored by Harry Sauthoff, of Wisconsin. In the Senate, where the resolution was presented by Charles W. Tobey, of New Hampshire, the question of convoys was briefly reviewed on March 31, with Senator Tobey taking the lead. During the debate Senator Barkley seemed to maintain that convoying ships, which Congress had declared to be unauthorized by the Lend-Lease Act, would not in itself necessarily result in war, any more than some other actions specifi-

6. For each item in the list see the *New York Times* for the following day.

7. Later, on April 2, Senator Tobey charged Senator Barkley with having said in effect that he could see no difference between convoying ships and repairing British ships in American harbors. Mr. Barkley replied that what he had meant to say was: "if Germany desires an excuse to wage war against us, the mere convoying of ships would be a mere incident so far as Germany is concerned. . . . If it were to their interest to do so they would not require such an incident even." *Congressional Record*, April 2, 1941, p. 2836. To Mr. Tobey this was another sign that Mr. Barkley was gradually shifting the position which he had taken when the Lend-Lease Bill was before Congress.

subject in the Senate is indicated by the following extract from

the *Congressional Record* of March 31, 1941:

Mr. Tolson. Mr. President, in this historic Chamber an earnest and historic debate was recently held, culminating in the passage of the so-called lease-lend bill. That debate was conducted by Members of the Senate in a spirit of sincere and earnest presentation of the facts as they understood them. Many of those who spoke for the lease-lend bill in this Chamber during the several weeks of debate took the position that they were voting for the bill because in their conscientious judgment it was the best means to keep us out of participation in the World War.

In contradistinction, those of us who voted against the bill held that we should vote against it because we honestly believed that it was fraught with the grave danger of making us a participant in the World War. So, sincere men on each side voiced their contentions, the majority prevailed, and the bill became law upon being signed by the President. But from this statement of mine it becomes apparent that all of my colleagues on both sides of that question had in their hearts a hatred of war, a bitterness toward war, and a fear that this Nation might be drawn into the war, that they were opposed to our being drawn into war. As the debate progressed toward taking the final vote on the lease-lend bill, there was but one Senator in this Chamber who came out definitely in advocacy of the United States' forthwith going into war.

The gravest issue now before the country is the question of whether or not we will be involved as a participant in this World War. Dr. Gallup, who has been quoted from one end of the country to the other, recently took a poll, as a result of which he certified, I believe, that 83 percent of the American people were opposed to the United States becoming involved as a participant in the foreign war.

With that background I make bold to state that the gravest issue now before the country is the issue of whether we shall go into that war or not.

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“(e) Nothing in this act shall be construed to authorize or to permit the authorization of the entry of any American vessel into a combat area in violation of section 3 of the Neutrality Act of 1939-”

Section 3, subsection (d) contains this language:

“(d) Nothing in this act shall be construed to authorize or to permit the authorization of conveying vessels by naval vessels of the United States.”

While the lend-lease bill was being considered before the House Foreign Affairs Committee and before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, there appeared before us many noted witnesses, not the least of whom was the present Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Frank Knox. He was asked by one of the Senators, “You stand very much opposed to the idea of conveying merchantmen across the Atlantic?” His answer was tersely and definitely, “Yes.”

“You do look upon it as an act of war?”

“Yes,” he said.

He made a similar statement before the House committee, in answer to a question from Mrs. Bolton, a Representative from the State of Ohio. His statement there was that he was very much opposed to the idea of conveying merchantmen across the Atlantic, that he looked upon it as an act of war.

The President himself in a recent statement given to the press made a similar statement. I think his words were:

“Convoing means shooting, and shooting means war.”

In confirmation of that I read from a feature article by Frank

L. Kluckhohn, appearing in the New York Times for January 22,

1941, in which he says:

“Sources close to the White House said it is obvious that if the United States Navy convoys ships, either under an American or other flag, into a combat zone, shooting is pretty sure to result, and shooting comes awfully close to war.”

Mr. Vandenberg. Mr. President, will the Senator yield at that point?

Mr. Tobey. I am very glad to yield to the Senator from

the United States is concerned. If he will permit me to do so, I should like to call attention to the unequivocal statement made by the distinguished chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on March 6, 1941, as reported at page 1892 in the Record. The very distinguished Senator from Georgia [Mr. George], the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, who piloted the lend-lease bill through the Senate, was speaking:

“As plainly as I can, I have always stood against convoying vessels by the American Fleet, and will stand against convoying vessels by any unit of the American Fleet until and unless the point shall come when I shall be willing to vote for war, because, in my judgment, convoying would lead us into actual war.”

Mr. To be y . I thank the Senator. That is a powerful indictment of convoys.

Mr. President, if it is our conviction that convoys mean war — and we have the eminent authority just cited, as well as the President of the United States and Secretary Knox and many other notable men in this country—we of the Congress having assured the American people that we will keep out of the war, as has the President and as has the distinguished candidate who opposed him in the recent election, then it logically follows that we of the Congress should take every step possible to keep us out of the war as a participant, and should use the powers vested in us by the Constitution to prohibit the use of our ships as convoys.

Mr. Connally . Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. To be y . I yield to the Senator from Texas.

Mr. Connally . Does the Senator from New Hampshire mean that the simple act of convoying would be war, or does he mean that the adoption of such a policy would result in acts of war by the other side? Which does he mean?

Mr. To be y . I will take as my authority the President's own words, when he said, “Convoys mean shooting, and shooting means war.”

Mr. Connally . Evidently the Senator does not care to answer my question.

Mr. To be y . I have answered it; I have quoted an eminent authority, and no man should be more obedient to that authority than the Senator from Texas.

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Mr. To be y . What is the question?

Mr. Conn a l l y . The question is, Does the Senator contend that it would be an act of war if we should adopt the policy of con voying vessels; or does he mean that the adoption of such a policy would inevitably result in acts of war by an enemy?

Mr. To be y . I will answer the Senator by saying that, in my judgment, it is an act of war for a neutral country to convoy ships carrying supplies to a belligerent.

Mr. President, I should like to have the attention of the Senator from Texas, who propounded the question.

Mr. Con n a l l y . I beg the Senator's pardon.

Mr. To be y . The Senator asked a question and then turned his back. Does he desire to have an answer to his question, or not?

Mr. Con n a l l y . I thought the Senator had answered the ques tion.

Mr. To be y . The answer to the Senator's question had been only half completed. More than that, with an abhorrence of war in my heart, an abhorrence which I hope is shared by the Senator from Texas, I think war will be a direct result of such convoying. As the Senator from Georgia, the chairman of our great committee, said, "If we convoy these ships, it means shooting, and that is tanta mount to a declaration of war."

Mr. Ba r k l e y . Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. To be y . I yield.

Mr. Ba r k l e y . I am not attempting to pass-upon the wisdom of attempting to convoy; but it seems to me that the mere act of convoying would not result in shooting unless the other side did some shooting. Regardless of what the President said, the shooting would depend entirely upon whether the other side wanted to shoot at the convoy, would it not?

Mr. To be y . Let me answer by propounding a question. Does the Senator agree with the President in his expressed utterance to which I have just referred?

Mr. Ba r k l e y . I may or may not. I am attempting to ascertain whether the Senator can elucidate what the President meant by some shooting. The mere convoying of a

that the mere convoying of a ship or of a group of ships across the ocean would automatically result in shooting?

Mr. To be y . No . In answer to the question asked by the Senator from Kentucky, the distinguished majority leader, I will put it this way: It seems to me that what the President had in mind—and it is apparent to all of us—was that if we convoy a group of ships carrying supplies to a belligerent, obviously the enemy of that belligerent is going to take steps to put those convoys out of business; and when, as, and if that occurs, the shooting begins, and our ships are sunk, there will be a wave of wrathful indignation that will go over this country and that will arouse the people passionately and earnestly and perhaps necessarily to cry out and to say, “We will go to war and lick those fellows over there.”

Mr. Barkley . I will say to the Senator that I think that is a deduction that is not far-fetched; but when it comes to technical acts of war, the mere fact that one peaceful nation permits a belligerent nation to repair its vessels in its own shipyards would be regarded under what used to be international law as an act of war, the mere lending or leasing or furnishing of equipment for war use might be so regarded. But we recognize the fact that all international law has been thrown out, and, judging by recent events, we see that it is difficult now to draw a comparison between one act of war that occurred when international law had some force and another act of war. So what is the difference, except that one may be more provocative than the other? In legal effect, what is the difference between convoying a ship on the ocean in order to safeguard transport of facilities and supplies to another nation, and permitting that nation’s warships to come into our harbors—as we have done by law—and permitting our Government to buy equipment and to furnish equipment and supplies to a belligerent nation, which we have done by law? What is the difference in international law between those two operations?

Mr. To be y . May I ask the Senator from Kentucky a question?

Mr. Barkley . I should like to have the Senator answer my

stated on the floor of the Senate when speaking against the lease-lend bill. I felt then, and still hold—I do not know whether the Senator recalls my statement at that time—that when we open our yards to repair belligerent ships, that might well involve us in war, as other things might, but standing out preeminently as a war danger, the danger of involving us in war, in my judgment, is the matter of convoys.

Mr. Barkley. Mr. President, will the Senator yield further?

Mr. Tobey. Yes. •

Mr. Barkley. I do not want to take the time of the Senator from New Hampshire or of any other Senator, because we have not as yet completed the morning hour and we are anxious to secure action on a couple of appropriation bills, but I wish to ask the Senator a question. Of course, it all depends on whether the nation against whom the operations are directed regards them as a sufficient breach of its rights to make an attack upon us or to declare war. It would have a technical right to declare war on us for allowing a British war vessel to be repaired in the United States; there is no doubt of that, and, under the old conception of international law, they would have the right to declare war against us because we loaned money to one of the belligerents in opposition to that particular country or do any of the things that we can do under the lease-lend bill we have authorized to be done and which are going to be done now—

The Acting President pro tempore. The Chair will state that the hour of 2 o'clock having arrived, morning business is closed. The Senator from New Hampshire has the floor.

Mr. Barkley. What I was trying to elucidate for the Senator from New Hampshire when the gavel rapped and disturbed the continuity of my thought was that if a nation sees fit to take advantage of the technical violation of what used to be international law to declare war against us or any other nation similarly situated, it could have done so already on the basis of what we have already done in aid of England or Greece or China. Is not that true?

Mr. Tobey. I cannot say that is true. Everything is relative in this world, as Mr. Einstein says. Let me ask the Senator is

Mr. Barkley. And I am answering the Senator in good faith; if we have violated international law in such a way as could result in a declaration of war against us by Germany, we have already done that, and the convoying of ships would be only an incident.

Mr. To be y. As I said a moment ago, the matter of convoys is the preeminent danger, in my judgment.

Mr. Barkley. It may be so.

Mr. To be y. And the President felt so when he made the statement to which I referred, and Frank Knox also said so.

Mr. Barkley. If Germany wants an excuse to declare war against us, she has already had it, and we know from her history with other nations that if it was to her interest she would have done it without any excuse. . . .

Mr. To be y. Does not the Senator feel that the matter of convoys presents a greater danger of involving us in war than any thing else?

Mr. Barkley. It may be; I am not disputing that; but what I am trying to ascertain is whether the Senator from New Hampshire thinks that Germany would wait if Germany saw it was to her interest to declare war, or whether Hitler would wait, for I do not really like to associate Hitler with Germany, because I have great respect for the German people; I have none for Hitler, and I hope the time will come when they will themselves recognize the difference between the German people and Hitler.

Mr. To be y. Let me say to the Senator that in that respect I agree with him 100 percent, but let me say further with reference to our colloquy here that there is always a straw that breaks the camel's back, and that straw, in my judgment, will be when, as, and if we send convoys to transport goods to belligerent nations.

Mr. Barkley. That will depend upon events that we cannot now foresee.

Mr. To be y. Does not the Senator feel so, too?

Mr. Barkley. I will express my views upon that subject when the occasion has arisen.

Mr. To be y. In the words of the advertisement, "If eventually, why not now?"

Mr. Barkley. I do not think it is possible for me to do

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Mr. To bey. Of course, the Senator is a past master of sarcasm that has no place in this Chamber, in my judgment. So I will proceed, if you please.

Mr. Barkley. The Senator has my permission to proceed, but did the Senator suggest that I was a psychiatrist?

Mr. To bey. No; and neither did I say that the Senator needs] a psychiatrist.

Mr. Barkley. I am willing to acquit the Senator from New Hampshire of any such need.

Mr. To bey. I said the Senator indulged in sarcasm and possibly that that might be out of place at this time.

Mr. Smith. Mr. President, will the Senator allow me to interrupt him?

Mr. To bey. I am glad to yield to the Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. Smith. With reference to the point made by the Senator from Kentucky that these acts in contravention of what was once international law have given the opportunity to certain nations to declare war against us, and they have not done so, let me say that when we send our vessels into the belligerent zone it is going to make us declare war against them.

Mr. To bey. I quite agree with the Senator.

Mr. Smith. That is what I am trying to avoid. It is not a question of their declaring war against us but it is the doing of those things which will force the American people to declare war against certain nations.

Mr. To bey. I quite agree with the Senator; and the Congress and the President having assured the American people they were going to do all they could to keep out of war, then it logically follows that the Congress should take every step to keep this Nation out of war and use all the powers vested in it by the Constitution to prohibit the use of our ships of peace for war purposes. To that end I am introducing a joint resolution, which I will take the liberty of reading. It is as follows:

“Joint resolution prohibiting the use of the armed forces of

documented, or aircraft registered or licensed, under the laws of the United States, shall be used, directly or indirectly, beyond the limits of the territorial waters of the United States and its Territories and possessions, to transport or deliver, or in connection with the transportation or delivery of, or for convoy purposes in connection with the transportation or delivery of, any articles or materials to or for the use of any foreign country with respect to which the President has issued a proclamation under section i of the Neutrality Act of 1939, or which is engaged in actual hostilities with one or more foreign countries, even though a state of war has not been declared or recognized in any such proclamation.” Mr. Vandenberg. Mr.

President, may I ask the Senator a question?

Mr. Tobey. I am glad to yield.

Mr. Vandenberg. I call the Senator’s attention to the language he has used in the joint resolution, “that except in time of war.” Of course, this is a time of war. I assume that the Senator means a war in which we are associated?

Mr. Tobey. The Senator is correct. I may advise him that I raised that question with the drafting agency of the Senate that helped draft the resolution this morning. They said it was the proper language to use, but I questioned it then, and will be very glad to change it.

Mr. Vandenberg. It does not seem to me quite definite enough.

Mr. Tobey. I thank the Senator, and I will change it.

Mr. President, since both groups in the Senate protest that they are opposed to our entry into the war, and since it is undisputed that convoying will definitely take us into the war, this joint resolution provides a means of affording Senators a vehicle to translate their public statements into specific legislation to keep the country from taking this fatal step into war. It presents the issue directly and without equivocation. The people have an opportunity to see whether the Administration and the Members of the Senate mean business. The Acting President pro tempore. Without objection, the joint resolution introduced by the Senator from New York will be received and appropriately referred.

“The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 62) prohibiting the use of the

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craft for transporting, delivering, or conveying articles or materials to belligerent countries, was read twice by its title and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.”

During the first two weeks of April, the issue of convoying loomed large in the press and Congress, while President Roosevelt again parried questions on the subject. Charges and countercharges flew thick and fast.⁸

In a dispatch dated Washington, April 16, published in the *New York Daily News*, April 17, John O'Donnell stated: “Charges that battlecraft of the Navy and Coast Guard are now giving armed escort to munition-laden British merchant men leaving Atlantic ports for the European battlefield exploded in the capital tonight.” Mr. O'Donnell said also that “detailed information” respecting the nature of this convoying or escorting had already been placed in the hands of Senators and would become a matter of public record in a Senate debate on Friday, April 18.

Concerning this “information” and the controversy over it, Mr. O'Donnell made the following additional statements. Late at night, April 16, the Navy Department authorized the issuance of an announcement credited to Admiral Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, which denied that the Navy was convoying British ships on the high seas. Senators opposed to convoying, Mr. O'Donnell continued, were not inclined to quibble over words but insisted that, whatever the word for it, American naval vessels were in fact giving to British ships all assistance of information, patrol, and reconnaissance for hundreds of miles outward from American ports; these

8. President Roosevelt turned aside a question on convoying; Senator Taft and a group opposed to convoying held a conference on the question. *New York Times*, April 2. President Roosevelt reported in conference with Secretary Knox and Admiral Stark on convoying. Senator Tobey sought action on his resolution, claiming that Secretary Knox favored convoying; Senator Barkley denied the allegation that Secretary Knox had been correctly reported. *Ibid.*, April 3. Report that British and American officers had held a staff conference on joint convoys. *Ibid.*, April 4. Report respecting the British-American conference on convoys denied by President Roosevelt. *Ibid.*, April 5. President Roosevelt reported as saying, after a conference with Admiral Stark, that the law required the United States Navy to protect ships in nonbelligerent zones. *Ibid.*, April 16.

Senators maintained also that American naval vessels, flying the Stars and Stripes, were sailing between opposing enemies on the high seas and daring one side to shoot.

Allegations of this kind had already come to President Roosevelt's attention and, according to Mr. O'Donnell's report, he had answered them through his secretary, Stephen Early. The President, speaking through Mr. Early, said that he was required by law to protect American shipping against attack outside the declared combat zones; and the President was very much "amused" by the newspaper stories. Mr. Early added: "The President suggested that he might startle the world in a few days with a sensational announcement that if New York City were attacked by an enemy it will be defended."

The following day, April 17, the President, through his secretary, again took note of the convoy charges. Mr. Early declared that American naval vessels were operating far out in the Atlantic "on neutrality patrol" and flashing news of alien ships in uncoded messages that anyone could listen to. He stated that American naval vessels were carrying out their original instructions "to observe and report" and were "keeping war from our front doors." Referring evidently to Mr. O'Donnell's dispatch of the previous day, Mr. Early added: "The President of the United States, after reading a morning paper, said that he thought the author of the story had very closely woven the long-time and historic policy of the United States into a story which was a deliberate lie." ⁹

The nature of the relation between the historic policy of the United States and the policy of convoying the merchant ships of a foreign belligerent in April, 1941, the President did not indicate. Nor did he explain its connection with the charge that American naval vessels were convoying or otherwise giving armed protection to British ships on the high seas. As reported the President's statement conveyed the idea that Mr. O'Donnell's story was false.

In a front-page dispatch from Washington, dated April 18,

9. *Ibid.*, April 18, 1941.

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the *New York Times* gave an extended account of the convoy controversy. The report stated that a message on the question from Senator Tobey had been received by Secretary Early “and referred to the Navy Department”—the head of which, Secretary Knox, had two days before declined to discuss the issue and had passed it on to the President. In response to an inquiry from a reporter, the President said that he had not read Senator Tobey’s message. From “some quarters” the author of the *Times* dispatch learned that the Navy Department had perfected plans for convoys and was ready to put them into effect whenever the President reached his decision.¹⁰

As Mr. O’Donnell had predicted in his story of April 16, Senator Tobey raised the question of convoys in the Senate on April 18:¹¹

Mr. Tobey : Mr. President, ... I have authoritative information that today in the White House there are thousands upon thousands of letters from the rank and file of the American people demanding to know what the President’s policy is on convoys and where the administration stands on this issue.

Because of the word-twisting phrases of avoidance and indirection employed by the Executive and his spokesmen in the Congress, and because it is only a matter of plain honesty for the White House to give the people a frank statement in the matter, I addressed last night to the President a telegram which I now read to the Senate:

“The President ,

“*The White House, Washington, D.C.:*

“The people of America are aroused on the issue of convoys. The time has come for a frank, unequivocal, and complete statement from you on this vital matter.

“For several weeks word-twisting phrases of avoidance and indirection have been used to conceal rather than reveal the policy of the Chief Executive on the matter of convoys.

“Please review in your mind the events of the past several weeks. During the period when the administration was soliciting support of the people for the lease-lend bill the question of con

voys came up, and you stated that convoys mean shooting, and shooting means war, thereby implying to the people that you were opposed to convoys.

"Your Secretary of the Navy expressed his opposition to convoys in public testimony before the House and Senate committees at their hearings on the lease-lend bill, but added that he would change his mind in favor of convoys if you gave the word.

"During the first week of April reliable newspapers reported that Secretary Knox was in favor of convoys. When queried by the press as to whether he had, in fact, changed his mind, he replied, 'I have no comment.' Thus the American people were not enlightened.

"Then the Associated Press reported your statement to legislative leaders that suggestions for convoys were 'too absurd to talk about at this time.'

"The next step was a New York Times report of conferences between British and American naval representatives to determine how a joint convoy system could be operated. The Christian Science Monitor and other leading papers reported that detailed plans for the use of convoys had already been drawn up and submitted to you.

"During this time you, Members of the Senate and House, and I were receiving thousands of letters from the American people seeking definite assurance that the Navy was not going to convoy. "Then the chairman of the House Military Affairs

Committee

sounded the note for convoys.

"Then you in a press conference admitted that the plan for convoys was under consideration.

"Then your spokesman, Representative Sol Bloom, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, issued a public statement denying the right of the Congress to prohibit convoys and asserting that you and you alone had the unrestricted authority in the matter.

"Then your White House Secretary, Mr. Stephen Early, said that you were very much amused at newspaper reports that American ships would be convoying.

"During this time the American people in increasing numbers were continuing to write to Washington for information as to your policy on convoys.

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statements made by people who did not know a hill of beans about it than you had ever seen before. You stated that you knew more about it than the writers and orators, but that you were not talking about it. Thus again the American people were left unenlightened because you did not care to discuss the subject.

"Yesterday reports persisted that the Navy is already being used to escort merchant vessels carrying war materials to belligerents. This morning your Secretary of the Navy said that there was not a syllable of truth in the report. Later this morning your White House Secretary, Mr. Stephen Early, branded the report as a deliberate lie, and still, regardless of these conflicting reports, you are silent in the face of the people's justified desire for direct, complete information from you.

"On different days of the past 3 weeks you have alternately advised the people that the suggestion of convoys was too absurd to talk about, that a plan for convoys was under consideration, and, finally, that you know more about the subject than anyone else but do not care to discuss it.

"Is not this issue of vital concern to the millions of American people? Have you not stated that convoys mean shooting and shooting means war for this country? Are not the people entitled to frank and honest dealing on this vital issue? Is this the kind of maneuvering that builds up the faith of the people in their Government?

"I recall to your memory your statement made to the American people over a Nationwide radio broadcast in which you said to them, 'You are, I believe, the most enlightened and the best informed people in all the world at this moment. You are subjected to no censorship of the news, and I want to add that your Government has no information which it has any thought of withholding from you.'

"In this hour when the men and women of the United States are asking for a statement from you, their national leader, in this hour when it is imperative in the national interest that the people be enlightened, and informed on the vital issue of convoys, which holds in the balance the question of our involvement in the war, I respectfully urge that you give me at this time a frank, informative, and unequivocal statement of your position on the issue of convoys.

“ 1. At any time during the past several weeks have United States aircraft or naval vessels or Coast Guard cutters been used to convey, escort, or otherwise used in conjunction with merchant vessels carrying goods to belligerent countries?

“2. Are any such aircraft or vessels now being so employed?

“3. Is there contemplation of such use of such aircraft or vessels in the near future?

“4. What instructions have been given to the officers of any such aircraft or vessels with regard to action in the event that any of these merchant vessels carrying goods to belligerents are attacked?

“A few weeks ago on another matter of importance to the people you were asked for a statement of your position and you replied to me in a letter marked ‘personal and confidential.’ I emphasize at this time that this is an issue vital to the people of America on which they are entitled to information, and I therefore respectfully request that your reply be of such a nature that I may give the people the assurance which they are entitled to.

“Charles W. Tobey,
“ *United States Senator.*

“April 17, 1941.”

Mr. President, you will recall that more than 2 weeks ago I addressed a telegram to Secretary Knox, calling upon him to state frankly to the people his policy regarding convoys, in view of his reported change of heart. The day after I sent the telegram to him, he was interviewed by the press as to whether the reports were true, and he replied:

“I have no comment.”

I advise the Senate at this time that to date Mr. Knox has given no reply to that telegram, and the people are still in ignorance on a matter for which they have a justified thirst for knowledge.

On March 31 I introduced a joint resolution (S.J. Res. 62) to prohibit convoys. Later on that day, a man who has close contacts with the Government came to my office and asked me if I would be surprised to learn that United States convoys were already being employed. I replied that I could not believe that the President would for a moment permit this

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This man left my office, and from then on I receive a series of persistent reports that convoys were being employed.

A few days ago Admiral Land, Chief of the Maritime Commission, came out in favor of convoys. Only yesterday, a Government investigator, well known to me, advised that he had information from within the Maritime Commission that convoys are being secretly employed at this time.

Why is it that the President has been unusually uninformative, in the face of the public demand for information, in the face of reports of reliable and reputable members of the press that plans had been drawn up for a joint enterprise of convoys between the United States and Great Britain; in the face of the report in Secretary Knox's own newspaper, the Chicago Daily News, made several weeks ago, that a plan for convoys was in the offing, although nobody, least of all the President, is saying so openly, in the face of the President's statement that he knows more about convoys than most others in the country, but that he was not going to tell the people about it; in the face of persistent reports that the Navy is already being used to convoy merchant vessels carrying war goods to belligerents?

Mr. President, these persistent rumors have come to me repeatedly in the past few days from various sources, and yesterday I received a letter, the contents of which I feel forced, as a public duty, to bring to the American people, and to the Congress. It comes from the Atlantic Seaboard, and reads as follows:

"April 15.

"My Dear Senator Taft : I know you are against convoying by our Navy. Some information has come to me which has shocked me. I think I should pass it on to you.

"A young relative is in the Navy. He has been at sea on service. He was taken ill and put ashore in order to go to a hospital. I cannot tell you the name of the port. In fact I should not write this at all, but I think you should know.

"He tells me that the United States Navy has been convoying ships for about 1 month. His ship was one of the convoys. If I tell you the name of the ship or the lad's name I would perhaps get him in trouble. He has been worried and thinks someone should know. "He says that they in the service know that the President's delay on the subject of convoying

“I trust you to use this information as you see fit, and only wish

I could have given more details.”

There, Mr. President, is a sincere, fair, frank statement through this relative, the testimony of a United States naval man, who is now in the hospital, and has been for a month on a ship which was part of an American convoy. Yet the President of the United States calls the suggestion that convoys are being used absurd, and laughs it off; and the American public, asking for information, are turned down cold. What price democracy? What has become of it in this country?

Because this naval man has had the courage and honesty to report a situation which holds in the balance the lives of millions of Americans, and because a revelation of the name of his relative who wrote this letter would, in all likelihood, lead to a revelation of this young man's identity, with the possibility of prejudice to his position in the Navy, I am keeping faith with the woman who wrote the letter by eliminating her name and address from the letter. If a committee of the Senate desires to hold hearings to investigate this matter, and will give assurances that this man's identity will not become known to his superiors, I shall be very glad, under such an arrangement, to turn the letter over to the committee or to make it available to them. . . .

Mr. President, it is a serious thing when the responsible officials of our Government, including our national leader, remain uninformative on this matter, which is so pregnant with danger to millions of American people. It is a danger to the American people when the convoy plans are drawn up in secret and there are hidden maneuverings to conceal from the people actions which are of such grave importance to the people. It is an incredible attitude for the President to laugh in the face of the people's justified request for information—for him to say, in the first instance, that convoys mean shooting and shooting means war, and in the second instance that the subject is too ridiculous for him to talk about—and in the third instance that he knows more about the subject than the rest of the people but does not choose to enlighten them. Mr. President, press conferences are held, I believe, on Tuesday and Friday of each week. I hold in my hand a copy of the

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in the United States of America. Mark Sullivan, writing under his own name, made the feature of his article yesterday morning the press conference of the President held last Tuesday, and I shall read a portion of it. A question was asked the President which had nothing to do with the subject I have been discussing. Mark Sullivan's article then proceeds:

"That question was meant, by allegory, to bring up the subject of use of our naval power to protect British cargo ships carrying supplies from us, in short, the question of convoy. This is a subject which Mr. Roosevelt does not like. Whenever it was brought up in this press conference, as it was in several forms, Mr. Roosevelt bridled. On this subject he said there has been more nonsense, more printer's ink wasted, more oratory by people who don't know a hill of beans about it than on any other subject in modern times. Having thus designated comprehensive ignorance as the state of others who speak on the subject, Mr. Roosevelt reassured us by saying that he knows something about the subject. While we were reassured by this, we were not enlightened in detail, for Mr. Roosevelt said he did not care to discuss the subject.

"From this momentary interlude of irritation Mr. Roosevelt was brought back to his high enjoyment of the occasion by one who asked whether he was going to take a scheduled trip to Warm Springs, Ga."

I quote that testimony from Mark Sullivan, bringing us a word picture of the press conference held last Tuesday, at which Mr. Sullivan says when the question of convoys was brought up, the President bridled, and irritation was manifest in the President's voice and manner. Why? Is it remarkable that on a question of such supreme importance the people want to know what is going on today? Their lives, their property, the lifeblood of their children is at stake in this matter. The President has said that "convoys mean war." Then why should not the people ask about these things, and why should the leader of this country, chosen in the last election for a third term, bridle up and become irritable because people ask him what the administration has been doing about convoys? A classic statement which I have hidden in my heart is—

"The truth will bear the test."

President, and who put us here in the Senate.” Let us measure up to their great trust in us, a trust that we shall keep faith with them and keep them out of war and in the paths of peace, if it is humanly possible, and that we will not resort secretly, if you please, to a policy of convoys, the use of which was confirmed by the eloquent testimony of this boy who is now in the hospital and who was on a warship which was engaged in convoy work a month, which the President says will mean war.

“Convoys mean shooting, and shooting means war. . .

In response to Mr. Tobey’s charges, Senator Barkley made two significant statements of a definite nature: (1) that in none of his conferences with the President had there been any discussion of convoys or any intimation that the problem of convoying was being considered; and (2) that on the authority of Secretary Knox and Admiral Stark no convoys had been used or were being used. Senator Barkley’s statements and his exchange of views with Senator Tobey follow:¹²

Mr. President, a few days ago when the matter of convoys was under discussion in the Senate, I was interrogated by the Senator from New Hampshire, although not on the floor but in my seat. I responded, and in that colloquy said that all I had ever heard about the convoy of American ships or British ships or any other ships carrying materials of war from any place to any other place was what I had read in the newspapers and what I had heard on the floor of the Senate. While I am not at liberty to reveal what takes place in private conferences between me and executive officers, including the President of the United States, I think I am at liberty to say that in no private conference in which I have participated has there been any discussion of convoys or any intimation that the problem of convoys was one that was being given consideration. What has happened in other conferences to which I was not a party I am not, of course, at liberty to say, for I do not know. In view of the discussion and the publicity which have revolved around the subject during the last few days, I took the liberty this morning to confer with the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Knox, and the Chief of Naval

if I thought it necessary to make any statement whatever about it on the floor of the Senate, that not a single ship, American or foreign, carrying any war materials from any place to any other place, had been convoyed or was being convoyed from any place to any other place, and that no orders had been received from any body in authority to give such orders for convoying any ship of any kind from any place to any other place anywhere in the world. I take it for granted that the statement of the Secretary of the Navy and the statement of the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Stark, in both of whom I believe the American people have implicit confidence, are entitled to credit by the American people and by Members of the Senate over the rumors and back stairs gossip of people whose names are not revealed, who, apparently, are willing to write letters, or of some unidentified officer somewhere in a department of the Government, whose name is not revealed, to the effect that they have a suspicion that the President of the United States, under his oath of office and in the exercise of his judgment in a great crisis in our history and in the world's history, is deliberately undertaking to deceive the American people and by connivance and under cover to bring about the convoying of ships, a suggestion which he publicly denounces as absolutely untrue.

I suppose there are persons in this country who do not give full faith and credit to the statement of any public officer, including the President of the United States; but I am confident that the American people, without regard to politics, Mr. President, believe that the President of the United States is earnestly seeking to preserve the interests of the United States, to carry out his obligation which he took on the 20th of last January to support the Constitution and to administer the Presidential office to the best of his ability, and I am firmly of the opinion that the American people do not believe, no matter from what source the insinuations may come, that Franklin D. Roosevelt is deliberately attempting to deceive them or that he is secretly carrying out some policy or purpose or course which he publicly and emphatically denies he is carrying out or that he issued any orders to anybody else to carry out.

In all frankness and with the utmost kindness, for I have

advocating anything in which he believes or which he discusses, I do not believe any man in a responsible position, here or else where, renders the American people any service by trying to create widespread suspicion that the President of the United States is not acting in good faith in all that he does or says upon this delicate subject. . . .

Mr. To be y . Mr. President, let me say to the distinguished majority leader—and I heartily reciprocate, as he knows, the feelings of good will he has expressed toward me—that it is about time those in authority in this country at the head of the Navy, either the bureaucratic head or the actual head, or the man in the White House spoke and enlightened the people on this burning issue of the hour.

I have not created suspicion or cast suspicion. The suspicion abroad in the land was generated from the inner circles of the administration of the United States Government when, if you please, the President called the suggestion of convoys absurd; when a few days later he said, “We are considering convoys”; when a youth from New England writes, “I am on a convoy ship, and have been on it for a month.”

Suspicion! If anyone with any perspicacity or understanding is not suspicious under these circumstances, he ought to go to a school for feeble-minded, in my judgment. There is ground for suspicion and incredulity all the way down through; and let me ask the Senator a question on this matter of convoys.

Mr. Ba r k l e y . That is what I thought the Senator rose to do. . . .

Mr. To be y . Let me ask the Senator one other question. Does not the Senator from Kentucky believe that the American people should have first-hand information and reassurance from the Executive and from the Secretary of the Navy and from Admiral Stark that convoys are not either being used or being considered? Does he not believe that?

Mr. Ba r k l e y . I have stated to the Senator from New Hampshire, and, if my words get into the press, to the country, that the Secretary of the Navy and Admiral Stark, the Chief of Naval Operations, have stated unequivocally and emphatically that convoys are not being used and have not been used in a single instance. The President of the United

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trary are absolutely untrue. What further can any of these gentlemen do to enlighten the American people?

Mr. To bey . I will say to the majority leader that it is unfortunate that it takes a campaign over the radio and public addresses in the Senate to smoke out some of the persons in authority to tell the American people about these things.

Mr. Ba r k l e y . There was nothing to smoke out except the buga boo the Senator himself has raised over the radio and elsewhere. Mr. To bey . The Senator from New Hampshire did succeed in getting the Secretary of the Navy on record, and also Admiral

Stark, the first time that was done.

Mr. Ba r k l e y . The Secretary of the Navy has stated repeatedly—

Mr. To bey . What has he stated?

Mr. Ba r k l e y . Practically what I have stated here today.

Mr. To bey . I will tell the Senator what he has repeatedly stated—that he is against convoys, because convoys mean war.

Mr. Ba r k l e y . All right. The Senator has quoted that statement time after time.

Mr. To bey . Yes; and I shall continue to do so.

Mr. Ba r k l e y . I have not the slightest doubt about it. [Laughter.]

Mr. To bey . Now , let me ask the Senator another question. Does he agree with me that, if American ships are sunk, it means war?

Mr. Ba r k l e y . The Senator and I discussed that question 2 or 3 weeks ago.

Mr. To bey . I ask the Senator the question again.

Mr. Ba r k l e y . I will stand upon the statement I then made. Whether convoys mean war or do not mean war, nobody now can prophesy.

Mr. To bey . Does the Senator believe they do?

Mr. Ba r k l e y . I do not know whether they do or not. I do not believe they necessarily do. Nobody can prophesy what the future will bring forth; and for that very reason I think it is unfair co the American people to conjure up imaginary

Mr. Barkley. Did the Senator say "patriots" or "patriarchs"? [Laughter.]

Mr. Tobey. Patriots. They are synonymous in this case.

I now read the words of the Senator from New York [Mr. Wagner]:

"There is only one realistic course for America to follow if it wants to avoid the causes of war and at the same time maintain its dignity and self-respect. This course is for the American Congress absolutely to prohibit American ships from carrying American passengers or American goods of any kind to any belligerent nation, or to proceed through any combat areas."

Those are the words of the distinguished senior Senator from New York.

What did Representative Sol Bloom, of New York, say on the same subject?

"Where a part of the world has gone mad, where laws and rights are trampled upon, it is folly for the United States to expect its ships and citizens to be safe in exercising their rights. They will not be safe. They will be slaughtered. The United States would go to war as a consequence, and in that war thousands of other lives would be sacrificed."

Now listen to what the Senator sitting behind the majority leader, the distinguished James F. Byrnes, of North Carolina, said about the danger of convoys.

Mr. Barkley. South Carolina, if the Senator please.

Mr. Tobey. South Carolina; I beg the Senator's pardon.

Mr. Byrnes. Mr. President, it is the State south of North Carolina.

Mr. Tobey. I realize that. I also remember what the Governor of North Carolina said to the Governor of South Carolina. [Laughter.]

The Senator from South Carolina is speaking:

"Under the administration proposal we sacrifice our right to sail the seas. By the cash requirement we sacrifice the right even to send American property on the ships of other nations."

“This Government clearly and definitely will insist that American citizens and American ships keep away from the immediate perils of the actual zones of conflict.”

I ask the majority leader, How can we convoy without entering the war zones?

Mr. Barkley. Mr. President, nothing has been done by the American Government since the war was declared in 1939, or since the passage of the lend-lease bill which is inconsistent with what the Senator from New Hampshire has read from the speech of the Senator from South Carolina [Mr. Byrnes].

Mr. To be. I now call the attention of the majority leader to his own words. I know he likes to hear them.

Mr. Barkley. That is a good speech, too. If the Senator from New Hampshire would quote from me oftener, he would make better speeches than he does. [Laughter.]

Mr. To be. I thank the Senator. In other words, in the opinion of the majority leader, the oracle has spoken, “thus saith the Lord,” when he speaks. [Laughter.]

Mr. Barkley. My opinion of myself is almost as good as the Senator’s opinion of himself, although not quite. [Laughter.]

Mr. To be. I shake hands with the Senator on that statement,

sir. I now read his own words to him:

“If we had intended to include the Navy in the Neutrality Act, we certainly would have said so, and would not have limited the interpretation of the words ‘American vessel’ by the provision for American registry—”

And so on.

Mr. Barkley. All right. I said that.

Mr. President, that is all I have to say on the subject of convoys. The Senator from New Hampshire has made this dissertation on numerous occasions here in the Senate and over the radio, and I presume he will do so again in the future; so it is not necessary to indulge in a running debate with him now on the subject; but I did feel that the American people and the Senate were entitled to the emphatic statements of the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations with respect to this entire situation. . . .

Patrolling as Appearances

the issue had been obscured, if not complicated, by President Roosevelt's announcement on April 10, that on the previous day an agreement had been signed with the Danish Minister in Washington which included "Greenland in our sphere of cooperative hemispheric defense." This action necessarily involved naval protection of American forces in Greenland and shipping to and from that occupied territory, but it was accompanied by no official statement respecting the actual measures of patrol to be employed.

About two weeks after the occupation of Greenland the Administration began to prepare the country for the use of American armed forces in assuring the delivery of lend-lease materials to the beneficiaries. In an address on April 24, 1941, Secretary Knox, without mentioning convoys by name, declared: "We cannot allow our goods to be sunk in the Atlantic—we shall be beaten if they do [are]. We must make our promise good to give aid to Britain. We must see the job through. All of this is needed for our own safety and our future security. This is our fight." 13 On the same day, Secretary Hull said as much in other words in a public address before the American Society of International Law. The declared policy of Congress and the President, he asserted, "means in practical application that such aid [to Great Britain and other countries] must reach its destination in the shortest of time and in maximum quantity. So ways must be found to do this." 14

The following day, April 25, 1941, President Roosevelt, at a press conference, referred to the addresses of Secretary Knox and Secretary Hull on expediting the delivery of materials to the beneficiaries of the Lend-Lease Act. He denied that the Government was considering naval escorts for convoys and stated that warships and airplanes were engaging in "patrol" work. For the instruction of the reporters he explained the difference between convoy and patrol. To emphasize his dis-

13. *New York Times*, April 25, 1941. This, of course, meant convoying which Mr. Knox had recently called "an act of war." See above, p. 31.

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tion, he said that there was the same difference between the two operations as between a cow and a horse and then added that calling a cow a horse, while all right with him, did not make it a horse.¹⁵ The *New York Times* report of the President's press conference on convoys and patrols follows:

Washington, April 25, 1941: At his press conference on April 25 Roosevelt expressed the following views on the subject of convoys:

1. Secretaries Hull and Knox spoke for a great many American people and for the President, as well as for themselves, when they said in speeches yesterday that ways must be quickly found to send the fullest possible aid to nations bearing the brunt of the Axis attack, and that the American people have irrevocably committed themselves to see that a victory of the aggressor nations should be prevented.

2. The Pan-American neutrality patrol was operating to protect the Western Hemisphere and advise shipping of danger in the same way that it had operated for a year and a half. Because the danger to the Western Hemisphere was growing greater, the patrol was operating farther at sea and would operate still farther as need to do so developed.

The patrol, made up of warships and planes, will go as far in the waters of the seven seas as may be necessary for the protection of this hemisphere. There never has been a 300 mile "safety" belt around the Americas as reported, it was insisted.

3. This was a patrol, however, and not a convoy.¹⁶ A convoy meant escorting merchant ships traveling in a group and protecting the ships from attack by fighting off an assailant. A patrol is a reconnaissance in certain areas to detect any aggressor ships which might be coming to the Western Hemisphere. It was indicated that ships could avoid areas reported to be dangerous. *The patrol*

15. Patrol is a military term. As a verb it means to send out troops in advance of the main body to reconnoiter the country, to go the rounds, and to gain information of the presence and movements of the enemy. To convoy is to accompany, escort, or guide. It is especially applied to ships of war accompanying merchant vessels for the purpose of protecting them against enemy forces.

16. As a matter of fact, the United States Navy was then and had been for some time secretly engaged in cooperating with the British in maintaining "escorts" to

'would report the presence of any aggressor to the President, and he would decide what to do.

4. *This government has no idea at this time of escorting convoys. There was no discussion of whether this action would be undertaken later.*

Mr. Roosevelt recalled that while wagon trains going westward in pioneer days had armed guards, they also had scouts. It was sensible to keep the trains more than two miles from where the Indians were, he added. The clear implication was that the neutrality patrol would do the same for ships crossing the Atlantic and operating elsewhere.

Whether this meant that Mr. Roosevelt thought the convoy system ineffective and that he was prepared to supply the British with an information service could not be ascertained.

Aides have privately maintained, however, that the President was reluctant to provide naval escorts for shipping unless public demand for such action was overwhelming.¹¹ It was regarded in

some quarters as significant that he coupled his remarks on convoys with a denunciation of appeasers and defeatists.

He remarked that a minority of Americans said out of one side of their mouths that they did not want dictatorships and out of the other that the dictatorships were bound to win the war. This was un-American and opposed to the views of most of the people, the President declared. He was willing to fight for democratic processes, and so were a great majority of Americans. . . . After warning reporters to be careful in interpreting the speeches of Secretaries Hull and Knox, the

President gave the following explanation of the patrol and convoy situation:

In September, 1939, the whole question of hemispheric defense came up. This was because of conditions at the outbreak of the war—the complete failure to adhere to international law and the surprise invasion followed by other attacks. At that time this and other nations of the Western Hemisphere started a patrol of the seas on all sides of the Americas. Some geographers said it extended 300 miles off the shores, but the President asked, off what shores?

¹¹ The Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, which headed

As a matter of fact the American Navy and vessels of other American nations patrolled up to reasonable limit, whatever that was. A lot of careless people called it 100 miles, but off the eastern shore of Maryland, for instance, the patrol always had extended 1,000 miles at sea.

The patrol was extended from time to time at different places and pulled in at others, depending upon day-by-day conditions. *This had continued for a year and a half.* From time to time the patrol has been extended and it will be extended farther as the protection of this hemisphere requires.

But these were patrolling operations, not convoying. There is the same difference between the two operations as between a cow and a horse. If one looks at a cow and calls it a horse that is all right with the President, but that does not make a cow a horse. The President does not think they are the same.

After defining in sea terms, as well, the difference between patrols and convoys, the President said that, by the rule of common sense, back in 1939 the area patrolled in the Atlantic was nearer to shore because there did not seem to be as much danger of attack as now. Bermuda, Newfoundland, Greenland or Brazil appeared safe.

Events in the war show attack to be more possible now than in 1939. Moreover, the United States has valuable American property and lives to protect now that it did not have then. In Newfoundland, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Antigua and, in fact, all the West Indies where this country has acquired bases, as well as in British Guiana, the United States has property where it did not have it a year and a half ago.

The President remarked that he had talked today to a Senator from the West. In the old days, the Senator recalled, wagon trains had some guards around them, but they did not move across the plains unless they had reports from scouts. It was not safe to wait until the Indians got two miles away. It was advisable to ascertain whether the Indians were 200 miles away.

It was at this point that Mr. Roosevelt denied the government was considering naval escorts for convoys.

"Has any better system been devised?" a reporter asked.

The reporter was told to read Bairnsfather, the cartoonist, creator of the World War's *Old Bill*, who sought "a better

What, the President was asked, was the relation of all this to British aid? That, said Mr. Roosevelt, was a new one.

The President thought reports that 40 per cent of American supplies going to Britain were being sunk was far too high. He did not, however, say how many supply ships were being sunk, or what percentages were involved.¹⁸

In distinguishing between convoys and patrols and ruling out “at this time” the use of convoys, the President at his conference on April 25, 1941, appeared to be adhering to the policy which he had announced on March 5, 1941, namely, he would not operate the Lend-Lease Act as “a war policy but the contrary.”¹⁹ American patrols would detect aggressor ships “coming to the Western Hemisphere”; they would report “the presence of any aggressor to the President, and he would decide what to do.” The nature of the decisions he might make after receiving such reports was left unsettled but there was no indication that he then contemplated the ordering of American patrols to fire at sight on aggressor ships.²⁰

During the weeks that immediately followed President Roosevelt’s exposition of patrolling, as distinguished from convoying, on April 25, Washington reverberated with charges that, in spite of his assurances, the American Navy was convoying British ships, and with counterassertions that, at all events, convoying is likely to be, or must be, the next step, no matter what had been declared in the Lend-Lease Act or by

18. *New York Times*, April 26, 1941, pp. i, 4. (Italics supplied.)

19. See above, p. 22.

20. Descending for a moment from the high realm of appearances, it is appropriate to note here briefly the actual plan which had been promulgated April 21, 1941, “at the direction of the President” and which had gone into effect on April 24, 1941—the day before he made his public statement on patrols. This plan, disclosed at the Pearl Harbor hearings more than four years later, ordered the American Navy to trail naval vessels and aircraft of the belligerent powers, other than the powers which had sovereignty over territory in the Western Hemisphere, and to “broadcast [not report to the President] in plain language their movements at four-hour intervals, or oftener if necessary,” and to “prevent interference with United States flag shipping,” without intervening in armed engagements of belligerents. The plan also stated: “*The execution of this plan shall give the*

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its Democratic sponsors of the act in Congress while the measure was pending. Indeed, on April 25, Representative Clare Hoffman of Michigan referred to newspaper reports that convoying was already in progress and declared that experience forced him to go along with reporters rather than official spokesmen in matters of truthfulness. Mr. Hoffman said that he had not believed President Roosevelt when the President avowed the intention of keeping the country out of war, "but millions of American citizens ignored his previous record and took him at his word." 21 From day to day, such allegations flew to and fro in the Capital.

April 29, Senator Tobey quoted passages from the *Washington Times-Herald* asserting that the Administration was putting heavy pressure on the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate for the purpose of smothering the resolution against convoying which was in the hands of the committee, and that the chairman of the committee, Senator George, was "strictly on the spot." The newspaper report cited by Senator Tobey called attention to the fact that Senator George had been against convoying during the discussions of the Lend-Lease Bill, and quoted Senator George as having said at that time: "I insisted at the White House that it be made clear that we are not undertaking to convoy shipments to Britain." 22

April 30. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations killed the anticonvoy resolution by a vote of ten to thirteen.

May 6. Secretary Stimson made a radio broadcast urging the adoption of measures to insure the delivery of supplies to Great Britain and saying that the Lend-Lease Act was not enough. While careful in his use of words, Mr. Stimson implied that convoying must be undertaken systematically. (Report of broadcast in *New York Times*, May 7, 1941-)

May 7. Representative D. E. Satterfield of Virginia declared himself in favor of convoying. (*Congressional Record*, May 7, 1941.) Other Democratic members of Congress soon

this example and made similar declarations of sentiments with regard to the subject.

May 9. Representative R. O. Woodruff charged Secretary Stimson with openly advocating the use of American naval vessels to convoy supplies to Great Britain. Mr. Woodruff stated that President Roosevelt's secretary, Mr. Early, had been asked by reporters whether the President had approved Mr. Stimson's address in advance and that Mr. Early had replied: "They might properly and safely assume Mr. Stimson had talked the speech over with the President in advance." (*Congressional Record*, May 9, 1941.)

May 15. Senator Tobey discussed in the Senate reports then in circulation to the effect that President Roosevelt had resolved to deliver a "sensational" speech openly advocating convoys but had at the last moment shrunk from taking the risk in view of popular hostility to war. Senator Barkley insisted that Senator Tobey had no right to make such claims. (*Congressional Record*, May 14, 15, 1941.)

May 26. Senator Harry Truman inserted in the *Congressional Record* a vigorous and outspoken address by Senator Joseph Guffey in favor of convoying even though war might result.

If in fact, at this time, President Roosevelt contemplated announcing in a public address the use of American naval vessels to convoy merchant ships to Great Britain, he refrained from the adventure. When, on May 27, he made a national broadcast relative to his proclamation of an unlimited national emergency, President Roosevelt gave a special explanation of the troublesome word "attack" ²³ and referred to the extension of the American "patrol" in the Atlantic, as if still clinging to the distinction which he had drawn at his press conference, April 25. He informed the country that the delivery of supplies to Great Britain "is imperative. . . . It will be done," leaving undescribed the exact methods he intended to employ,

◇r was employing. With regard to "attack" and "patrol" the President declared:

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I have said on many occasions that the United States is mustering its men and its resources only for the purpose of defense—only to repel attack. I repeat that statement now. But we must be realistic when we use the word “attack”; we have to relate it to the lightning speed of modern warfare.

Anyone with an atlas and a reasonable knowledge of the sudden striking force of modern war, knows that it is stupid to wait until a probable enemy has gained a foothold from which to attack. Old-fashioned common sense calls for the use of a strategy which will prevent such an enemy from gaining a foothold in the first place.

We have, accordingly, extended our patrol in north and south Atlantic waters. We are steadily adding more and more ships and planes to that patrol. It is well known that the strength of the Atlantic Fleet has been greatly increased during the past year, and is constantly being built up.

These ships and planes warn of the presence of attacking raiders, on the sea, under the sea, and above the sea. The danger from these raiders is greatly lessened if their location is definitely known. We are thus being forewarned; and we shall be on our guard against efforts to establish Nazi bases closer to our Hemisphere.²⁴

In respect of patrolling, with its probability of warlike “incidents,” these lines from the President’s address of May 27 were sensational. The area of “defense” was widened indefinitely and the word “attack” defined to include actions other than assaults on American territory, possessions, or ships. But, as far as public information was concerned, nothing more than patrolling was in process: “We have, accordingly, extended our patrol in north and south Atlantic waters. We are steadily adding more and more ships and planes to that patrol.”²⁵

Many implications could be read into the President’s announcement of May 27, notwithstanding his restriction of actions to patrolling and reporting, and watchful observers discovered in the address signs of an intention to proceed rapidly

24. Thirteen days earlier, May 14, 1941, Admiral Stark issued a memorandum

with operations likely to result in hostilities. For example, Senator Robert A. Taft, in a broadcast the following evening, reviewed the campaign pledges of 1940 and charged President Roosevelt with threatening to take warlike, aggressive action at his own discretion in defiance of Congress and the Constitution. Senator Taft said:

There is only one way in which this question ought to be determined under a democratic form of government. The Constitution provides that only Congress can declare war, and rightly so, because the Members of Congress are the most direct representatives of the people whose vital interest is at stake; rightly so, because no nation should go to war unless a majority of the people approve that action. The President has no right to declare war whether a national emergency exists or not. It follows inevitably that he has no right to engage deliberately in military or naval action equivalent to war except when the country is attacked.

There is another reason why this great issue today must be submitted to the people. Less than 7 months ago the President gave his pledge, "We will not send our Army, naval and air forces to fight in foreign lands outside of the Americas except in case of attack." The Republican candidate was equally emphatic. He said: "The American people do not want war. They have no idea whatever of joining in any conflict, whether on the Atlantic or the Pacific. They are determined to keep America at peace. In this determination I stand with them. I am for keeping out of war." We now face the fundamental question whether we shall abandon the position of both political parties in the last election. Surely that cannot be done without submitting the question directly to the representatives of the people.

The President's broadcast last night was a disappointment to millions of people because it still avoided the basic issue. It still indicated *an intention on his part to push farther and farther toward war without consulting the people.* In recent months there has been a tremendous growth of public sentiment against war and against convoys. *Because the President sensed that feeling, he carefully avoided any direct advocacy of convoys or of war. He talked of patrols and defense and freedom of the seas. His arguments with regard to Hitler, if they are valid at all, are*

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people are opposed to it. *His speech contains vague threats of aggressive, 'warlike action to be undertaken in his sole discretion.* He hints that the term "defense" will be interpreted by him to mean the occupation of islands 3,000 miles from our eastern shore, within 400 miles from Africa, belonging to a neutral nation. In short, he is suggesting that he may, in dictator style, take warlike action without submitting to the people whose vital welfare is concerned the question whether or not we shall go to war. That is not democratic procedure.²⁶

Whatever may have been known in official circles during June and July, 1941, about realities of patrolling, the American public knew little or nothing about them. Indeed, as late as July 30, 1941, the *New York Times* reported that the Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox, had declared "there was no truth in the other newspaper stories that naval units were convoying or escorting ships at sea or dropping depth charges on German naval units." The release of the statement made by Secretary Knox could not fail to leave the impression on the public that convoying was not in effect.²⁷

As to what was really going on at sea, according to the form of action described by President Roosevelt in his public statement of April 25, 1941, as "patrolling" and "reporting,"

26. *Congressional Record*, May 29, 1941 (Appendix). (Italics supplied.)

27. A secret defense plan issued by the Navy at the direction of the President on July 11, 1941, after the occupation of Iceland, was broad in scope, especially as applicable to shipping to and from Iceland, Greenland, and the northern portion of North America. Orders to the American Navy instructed it to "protect United States and Iceland shipping against hostile attack by *escorting, covering, and patrolling*, as required by circumstances, and by destroying hostile forces which *threaten such shipping*." Since the President, on April 25, 1941, had defined convoying as "escorting," the Navy was by this order of July 11, 1941, actually directed to engage in convoying and to wage war on hostile forces that threatened such shipping. Furthermore the Navy was ordered to "escort convoys of United States and Iceland flag shipping, including the shipping of any nationality which may join such convoys between United States ports and bases and Iceland." Other orders issued to the Navy on July 25, 1941, August 13, 1941, August 25, 1941, and September 3, 1941, broadened patrolling, escorting, and convoying to wider areas and authorized hostile acts against Axis craft. An order of August 28 extended similar operations to waters in the Southeastern Pacific. CJC, Part 5, pp. 2294(1). (Italics supplied.) See below, Chap. XIV, "Secret War Decisions and Plans."

no definite information was issued to the public by the White House.

On June 9, 1941, the *Washington Post*, a journal that supported the President's foreign policy, carried on its first page a story by two prominent columnists, Alsop and Kintner, which charged the Administration with pursuing a strangely equivocal course in its war program and failing publicly to disclose episodes in the Atlantic patrol. They asserted that more than a month earlier there had been some kind of encounter between American and German warcraft and that slightly more recently an American destroyer had made an attack on what was believed to be a German submarine. The columnists also declared that "the President, all his important advisers, and the War and Navy Departments hope . . . that the patrol will produce an incident to serve as the pretext for really effective action by this country . . . the chances are strong that an incident will eventually occur. . . ." 28

On the same day, June 9, 1941, Senator Burton K. Wheeler read into the *Congressional Record* passages from the Alsop and Kintner story and, as he read, commented on them:

Today, on the front page of the Washington Post, is another story
by Alsop and Kintner:

"Nothing better illustrates the strangely equivocal position in which present war policy places this country than the undis closed episodes of the Atlantic patrol. In one case, rather more than a month ago, an encounter between German and American war craft at sea very nearly terminated in an attack by the Germans. In another, slightly more recent, an attack on what was believed to be a German submarine was actually made by an American destroyer.

"No details of the first episode are available, but the basic facts
of the second are known."

Known to whom? Known to these columnists, who get inside

28. This was a significant way of alleging that the President was seeking to

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information from the War Department and from the Navy Department—facts which are denied the Members of the United States Senate.

“The destroyer, the name of which cannot be ascertained, was picking up survivors from a British vessel sunk not far from the coast of Greenland. While the operation was in progress the destroyer’s detecting device announced the approach of a sub marine. The submarine could only have been German. It was virtually certain to use its torpedoes, as semidarkness concealed the nationality of the American ship. And the commander of the destroyer accordingly dropped three depth charges.

SHOOTING ALREADY

“Thus, although the President is waiting for the Germans to shoot first, the truth is that there has been shooting already.” In other words, here on the front page of the Washington Post is an article by these men saying, “Now you have an excuse. Shooting has already started. You ought to go into the war, and you ought to start shooting in a shooting war.”

“The truth may be denied—indeed, it is likely to be. The outcome of the episode is a mystery, since the light was too poor for the commander of the destroyer to make certain that the submarine really was nearby, or to guess whether the depth charges had taken effect. But official denials cannot alter either the episode’s basic facts or its broad meaning.”

What nonsense. One minute they say shooting has already taken place, and the next minute they say they do not know whether the submarine was a German submarine or not; they do not know how close it was; they do not know anything about it. . . .

The article goes on to say:

“The episode’s meaning is pretty obvious. The Atlantic patrol in itself is not effective. Even now it has not been extended to cover the most dangerous waters, yet four British ships have recently been sunk in the part of the ocean it supposedly guards. The President, all his most important advisers, and the War and Navy Departments hope, however, that the patrol will produce an incident to serve as the pretext for really effective action by this country. The interest of the Germans is to avoid such an incident. It is perfectly possible

and that the Germans have suppressed all public complaint in order to keep public opinion here in its present lulled condition. Nevertheless, as the episode described above pretty clearly demonstrates the chances are strong that an incident will eventually occur. . . .”

If what Alsop and Kintner say about the President is not true, then they are doing the President of the United States a very great disservice. If what they say is true, then the American people should know it. Whether it is true or untrue I do not know, but it is inconceivable to me that a man who has been elected President of the United States for three consecutive terms, who has been given the greatest honor the American people could bestow upon him, would be anxious to take the country into war; I cannot believe he is praying for an incident which would make it possible for him to take us into war.²⁹

At his weekly press conference, June 11, 1941, the Secretary of the Navy denounced the depth-bomb story, without denying it. The following account of the conference appeared in the *New York Times*, 12, 1941:

Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy, served notice on some forty newspaper correspondents who attended his weekly press conference today that he expects them to print only such news about Navy operations as his office considers proper.

He denounced a printed report that an American destroyer had depth-bombed away an approaching German submarine, but declined either to confirm or deny the report.

“You can get news of anything that is true and that ought to be printed,” the Secretary said. . . .

Secretary Knox was then asked what had been done or would be done about publication on Monday morning in several newspapers of a syndicated story detailing reports of an alleged near-encounter between an American destroyer and a German submarine.

“I don’t know anything about it,” Mr. Knox replied. “I did not get any information about it. But I think it was a terrible thing to print.”

“Is the story true?” the Secretary was asked.

“I am not discussing it. There is no comment,” Mr. Knox said.

our naval vessels are doing such acts as above described in violation of law that it ascertain at whose direction and upon what authority such acts were committed. 31

Two days later, July 2, 1941, Secretary Knox, who had previously been noncommittal on the subject, positively denied that American naval vessels had been engaged in encounters with German craft while on patrol missions, and declared untrue the assertion that the Navy was actually conveying vessels. The *New York Times* gave the following account of the press conference at which the Secretary's denial was made:

Secretary Knox denied categorically today that naval vessels had been engaged in encounters with German craft while carrying out patrol missions in the Atlantic Ocean.

On previous occasions the Secretary had replied to inquiries concerning such reports with the words, "No comment."

When reporters asked again today, in view of new reports of encounters recently as told in syndicated columns, the Secretary was positive in his reply.

"Can you tell us," a reporter asked, "whether any American vessel has been engaged in any encounter with a belligerent craft?"

"Most decidedly not," Secretary Knox replied.

He was equally emphatic in stating that the American Navy has lost no lives and has lost no property in carrying out its patrol functions.

"Then what is the basis," an inquirer asked, "for these stories of shooting?"

"There has been a leak somewhere," Mr. Knox said. "Some one has talked unwisely and incorrectly."

"How about the suggestion that the Navy actually is conveying vessels?"

"That is absolutely untrue," Mr. Knox replied.³²

A momentous step in respect of patrolling was taken early

Iceland “in order to supplement, and eventually to replace, the British forces which have until now been stationed in Iceland in order to ensure the adequate defense of that country,” as President Roosevelt explained it to Congress in his message of July 7, 1941, announcing the *fait accompli*. In his explanation, the President also expressed the view that he had authority to use the armed forces of the United States in about any way he deemed necessary to keep the sea lanes open for “the steady flow of munitions to Britain.”

The process of reasoning by which the President arrived at this conclusion was definitely stated in his message to Congress.³³ The occupation of Iceland by Germany, he declared, would constitute “a serious threat in three dimensions”:

The threat against Greenland and the northern portion of the North American continent, including the islands which lie off it.

The threat against *all shipping in the North Atlantic*.

The threat against the *steady flow* of munitions to Britain

— *which is a matter of broad policy clearly approved by Congress.*³⁴ It is, therefore, imperative that the approaches between the

Americas and those strategic outposts, the safety of which this country regards as essential to its national security, and which it must *therefore* defend, shall remain *open and free from all hostile activity or threat thereof*.

As Commander-in-Chief I have *consequently* issued orders to the Navy that *all necessary steps be taken to insure the safety of communications in the approaches between Iceland and the United States, as well as on the seas between the United States and all other strategic outposts*.

This government will insure the adequate defense of Iceland with full recognition of the independence of Iceland as a sovereign state.

Many members of Congress were excited by the reports that a “shooting war” had begun. Republicans charged that the occupation of Iceland was an unlawful step toward an undeclared war and that hundreds of American workmen were

constructing another naval base in northern Ireland. Far and wide, concern was expressed over President Roosevelt's declaration of July 7 that he had ordered the Navy to insure safety of communications in the approaches to Iceland and elsewhere, and restless members of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs were at last moved to act. They voted to call Secretary Knox and Admiral Stark before them in an executive session. The chairman, Senator David Walsh, announced that he intended to ask Secretary Knox for clear answers to the reports that the Navy had already engaged in a "shooting war."³³

Just what transpired at the secret session of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs on July 11, 1941, was not made public. The following day the *New York Times* reported that Secretary Knox and Admiral Stark had denied that the American Navy had engaged in combat with German naval units while patrolling the North Atlantic; but the *Times* account also indicated some uncertainty as to whether the denial was categorical after all. Here is the exact language of the account:

Categorical denials of published reports that the American Navy had engaged in combat with German naval units in patrolling the North Atlantic were made by Secretary Knox and Admiral Harold R. Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, during three hours of secret questioning today by the Senate Naval Affairs Committee. Some of the committee members said, however, that they could not conclude from the testimony of the two officials that there had been no "shooting" of any kind by our ships. Some of them understood Mr. Knox to confirm in effect that on one occasion an American destroyer had dropped a depth bomb when its detecting instruments indicated the nearness of a submarine as the destroyer was picking up survivors from a sunken British vessel in semi darkness.

In the main, however, Mr. Knox and Admiral Stark repudiated all suggestions that the Navy had been engaged in aggressive activities against Nazi ships. . . ,3365

Rumors persisted to the effect that, despite the alleged denials of Secretary Knox and Admiral Stark shooting of

some kind had occurred and was occurring in the North Atlantic. At last on July 29, 1941, the Senate Naval Affairs Committee released an extract from a statement made by Secretary Knox at a secret hearing which purported to give an official account of one alleged incident. This extract, including direct and indirect quotations from the Secretary's testimony, appeared in the *New York Times* of July 30, 1941, in part, as follows:

One United States destroyer, said Colonel Knox, operating off Greenland heard the SOS of a steamer and proceeded to the location and picked up sixty of the survivors of the steamer. While engaged in this act of mercy, the operator of the listening equipment reported to the captain that he thought he heard a submerged submarine.

The captain immediately turned toward the direction indicated and dropped three depth charges. In doing so he very prudently exercised the right of self-preservation, for had there been a submarine there his destroyer might have been sunk.

There was no other evidence that a submarine was there and it is quite possible no submarine was there. The equipment echo might have been received from a whale or a large fish, or a cold current, instead of a submarine.

Aside from this one incident, which was disclosed by two members of the crew of the destroyer after they returned to Boston, there was no truth, Secretary Knox said, in the other newspaper stories that naval units were convoying or escorting ships at sea or dropping depth charges on German naval units. . . ,³⁷

Thus as far as official appearances were concerned, the month of July, 1941, closed with official assurances that "there was no truth . . . in the other newspaper stories that naval units were convoying or escorting ships at sea or dropping depth charges on German naval units." It seemed then that President Roosevelt's statement on April 25 to the effect that there was patrolling and reporting, but no convoying or escorting, was still as valid as when he made it. Secretary Knox had, indeed, conceded that an American destroyer had

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dropped three charges in response to indications from its listening equipment; yet he had added that this had been done in the interests of self-preservation and that “the equipment echo might have been received from a whale or large fish, or a cold current, instead of a submarine.” 38

According to the appearances of words and actions by the Roosevelt Administration in July, 1941, Greenland and Iceland had been occupied by American forces and the President had issued orders to the Navy to insure the safety of communications between the United States and “strategic outposts.” These orders could be construed to mean that every kind of step was being taken, including convoying and shooting as well as the patrolling announced by the President on April 25, to keep the seas open to all the outposts which he deemed “strategic.” But Secretary Knox declared “absolutely untrue” on July 2 the suggestion that the Navy was actually convoying vessels and, later in the month, he denied that naval units were convoying or escorting ships at sea.

American newspapers, however, by unearthing and publishing news, made the official appearances look dubious, if not deliberately deceptive. The insistence of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs that the public and Congress had a right to know what was going on, to know whether President Roosevelt was clandestinely pushing “aggressive activities” against Nazi war vessels toward open hostilities and full-fledged war, brought out facts that had been suppressed or denied. Consequently, President Roosevelt, Secretary Knox, and Admiral Stark were embarrassed by “leaks,” charges, and reports to the effect that they were making “complicated moves” which had all the grim reality of acts of aggression. Affairs had reached such a stage by the middle of June that Secretary Knox sought to impose a peacetime censorship on the newspapers—he served notice on them that he expected them “to print only such news about Navy operations as his office considers proper.” What of President Roosevelt’s prom-

38. For the further development of “patrolling” into a “shooting war,” see

ise in March, 1941, that the policy under which the Lend-Lease Act would be operated would not be a war policy, but “the contrary”? 39 Was there, after all, as much difference as he had claimed in April between patrolling and convoying as between a cow and a horse? 40

39. See above, p. 22.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 100. Writing on the state of American naval assistance to British merchant shipping, Edgar McInnis, British historian of the war, said that in June, 1941, “the United States was not ready to engage openly and admittedly in the work of convoying. But her patrols were sweeping half way across the Atlantic. . . , *The War: Second Year* (Oxford Press, 1941), p. 217.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY in August, 1941, alert journalists discovered on the 3d of the month President Roosevelt had embarked on the warship *Potomac* for what was officially called a private cruise, and that the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, and Harry Hopkins, the President's "observer," had disappeared from London. Immediately it was suspected that an important conference was to be held somewhere in the Atlantic. But not until August 14 was the veil of secrecy lifted. On that day a statement was issued by the White House giving the American public an official report on the Atlantic meeting, which apparently covered the subjects discussed, the policies adopted, and the decisions reached. The first sentence of the document read: "The following statement signed by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain is released for the information of the Press."

The official statement of August 14, given out in Washington and London, consisted of two parts: a report on the transactions of the conference and a joint declaration of general principles, soon to be known as the Atlantic Charter. In the first part it was disclosed that the President and the Prime Minister had met at sea; that they had been accompanied by officials of their two governments and by high-ranking officers of their respective armed forces; that the problem of the supply of munitions as provided by the Lend-Lease Act for the powers engaged in resisting aggression had been further examined; that Lord Beaverbrook, British Minister of Supply, would proceed to Washington to discuss additional details

1. For President Roosevelt's statement in 1944 that the Atlantic Charter had not been formally drawn up in a single document and duly "signed," see *New*

with appropriate officials of the United States Government; and that these conferences would also deal with the supply problems of the Soviet Union.

The first part of the official statement, relative to the transactions of the Atlantic meeting, also reported that the President and the Prime Minister had held several sessions. It stated: "They have considered the dangers to world civilization arising from the policies of military domination by conquest, upon which the Hitlerite government of Germany and other governments associated therewith have embarked, and *have made clear the steps which their countries are respectively taking for their safety in the face of these dangers.*" (Italics supplied.)

Presumably by the words "made clear," the President and the Prime Minister meant that they had made clear to each other the steps which "their countries" were taking for their safety; for in no official communique did the President and the Prime Minister make clear to the public the steps which they had actually taken at the Atlantic Conference in respect of safety for the United States or Great Britain.

The second part of the official release on August 14 opened with the announcement that the President and Prime Minister "have agreed upon the following joint declaration: . . . being met together, [they] deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future of the world."

Immediately following came their declaration of principles:

First, their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other;

Second, they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned; Third, they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.

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ing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all states, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity;

Fifth, they desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing, for all, improved labor standards, economic advancement, and social security;

Sixth, after the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want;

Seventh, such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance;

Eighth, they believe that all of the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea, or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments.

(Signed) Franklin D. Roosevelt.

(Signed) Winston S. Churchill.

August 15, 1941, the White House released to the press copies of a joint message from President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill to Josef Stalin offering to provide Russia with supplies in the war against Hitlerism and proposing a conference in Moscow on the apportionment of joint resources in this enterprise.²

The next day, August 16, when President Roosevelt greeted representatives of the press at Rockland, Maine, on his return from the Atlantic meeting, he was in excellent humor but rather uncommunicative. As if anticipating requests

for information more definite than that given in the White House releases, the President told the reporters that he and Mr. Churchill had spent “more than a day together” and had discussed the situation on every continent and in every section of every continent. A reporter called his attention to the fact that the eight peace aims set forth in the official statement of August 14 said nothing about how Nazi tyranny was to be destroyed. The President remarked that this was a narrow way to look at it; and added that the discussions were “primarily” an interchange of views on the present and the future. Had he and Mr. Churchill reached a complete understanding on all aspects of the war situation? The President said that he thought so.

Then came three questions which went to the roots of foreign policy and the heart of the business. “Are we any closer to entering the war?” While declining to permit a direct quotation, the President said that he should say no. How were the conferences with Mr. Churchill to be implemented? The President answered that there would be further exchanges of ideas. Would Russia be asked to subscribe to the eight points? The reply was that no one had suggested it until the reporter raised the issue.

The following passages are from the *New York Times* account of the Rockland press conference on August 16:

The President said that he had been with Mr. Churchill for more than a day—he would be no more specific than that—and that at one time or another they had discussed the situation on every continent. Every continent you ever heard of, he added facetiously. There wasn’t a single section of a single continent that hadn’t been discussed, he said.

He said the idea of the conference had been jointly that of Mr. Churchill and himself, that it had been talked about since February, but because of the Greek and Crete campaigns had been delayed for three months beyond the intended date.

The President was reminded by a reporter that the eight peace aims jointly announced on Thursday said nothing about how the “Nazi tyranny” was to be destroyed.

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The President replied that this was a narrow way to look at it. The conferences, he said, were primarily an interchange of views on the present and future—a swapping of information that was eminently successful.

Mr. Roosevelt was asked whether it could be assumed that he and Mr. Churchill had reached a complete understanding with regard to all aspects of the war situation. He replied: Yes, he thought so.

Some one asked: “Are we any closer to entering the war?”

The President replied that he should say no. He declined, how
ever, to permit direct quotation of this answer when a reporter asked whether it might be enclosed in quotation marks.

On how the Churchill conferences would be implemented, the President would only say that there would be further exchanges of ideas.

“Will Russia be asked to subscribe to the eight points?” the President was asked.

He replied that no one had suggested it until the reporter asked
the question.

The President added, however, that the conferees had discussed fitting Russian needs into the existing production program.³

Two days later, August 18, President Roosevelt met congressional leaders in Washington and, it was said, gave them a detailed account of the Atlantic conferences with Mr. Churchill. If press reports of what he told them were comprehensive, he told them little. He did, however, “repeatedly” assure them that he had made no *new* commitments for the United States in his conversations with Mr. Churchill. Apparently he did not explain to the members of Congress what he meant by the word “new.” Apart from his reassuring declaration as to commitments, the most significant feature of his report to congressional leaders was his statement that the chief dangers of early involvement in a “shooting war” lay in the Far East where the chances were even that Japan would start new aggressions.

leaders, as described in a special dispatch to the *New York Times*, scarcely went beyond a denial of new commitments and a warning against dangers in the Far East. Such at least seemed to be the chief upshot as gathered by Turner Catledge, the author of the dispatch:

In a detailed report to Congressional leaders on his meeting at sea with Prime Minister Churchill, President Roosevelt today described Russia as the key to the immediate situation in Europe and raised the hope that the Soviet would hold out indefinitely against the Nazi military machine.

The President told the Capitol spokesmen who conferred with him at the White House to encourage their colleagues not to be come alarmed at the early German progress on the Eastern Front. Russian resistance had probably already precluded an attempt by Germany to invade Great Britain this year, he told them, expressing meanwhile, a British view, which he seemed to endorse, that a decisive German defeat would require an invasion of the Continent by Great Britain and her Allies. Apparently he could

see nothing but a long war.

Mr. Roosevelt assured his visitors repeatedly that he had made no new commitments for the United States in his conversations with Mr. Churchill. He said all phases of the international situation had been explored, and that possibilities of action in view of likely developments had been discussed.

The chief danger of the early involvement of the United States in a "shooting war" as he saw it, lay in the situation in the Far East, where, he intimated, chances were about even that Japan would start new aggressions.

The President evidently convinced the conferees that Russia

was a long way from being routed, despite the German advances of the last few days. Though he said the eventual and final defeat of Germany would undoubtedly require the invasion of the Continent of Europe by Britain and such allies as she had at the time, he left no impression that an attempt to take troops across the English Channel was being planned.⁴

The next day, August 10, at his first press conference in

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dent Roosevelt seemed to be in a mood to tell the American people that they were already at war and that they must quickly realize the serious nature of the struggle they had on their hands. Yet he intimated that he did not intend to take the issue to Congress or the people; for he said that the "accurate reporting" of the Atlantic meeting "made it unnecessary for him to make a fireside chat explaining the event to the American people."

Extracts from the account in the *New York Times* of the August 19 press conference follow:

President Roosevelt emphasized today that it was imperative for the American people to realize they had a major struggle on their hands if the fight of the democracies against nazism was to be won. He said this fight would go through 1943 if necessary.

In his first press conference since his return to Washington after his meeting at sea with Prime Minister Winston Churchill, the President read a statement that Abraham Lincoln made to Mrs. Mary A. Livermore of Chicago in 1862, in which Lincoln was quoted as having said the people "have no idea that the war is to be carried on and put through by hard, tough fighting." There was a parallel in the situation today, Mr. Roosevelt emphasized. The President said flatly, in reply to questions, that he thought many people in the United States had not awakened to the danger to this country and that people all over the world had not realized the world danger.

The primary result of his meeting with the British Prime Minister, the Chief Executive emphasized, was that it had brought a better meeting of minds on the fight the democracies are putting up against nazism.

It seemed clear to his auditors that Mr. Roosevelt had come back to Washington with a grim determination that the United States should play its part effectively in assuring the overthrow of Hitlerism, with all it represents, and that he was chiefly concerned now with the state of American public opinion. Asked whether he had any comment on the fact that the House of Representatives had agreed to extend the period of service of soldiers for eighteen months by only one vote

The President read the following excerpt of President Lincoln's conversation with Mrs. Livermore as reported in "Abraham Lincoln: the War Years," by Carl Sandburg. The passage from the book read as follows:

" 'I have no word of encouragement to give,' was the slow, blunt reply. 'The military situation is far from bright; and the country knows it as well as I do.' . . .

"The President went on: 'The fact is the people have not yet made up their minds that we are at war with the South. They have not buckled down to the determination to fight this war through; for they have got the idea into their heads that we are going to get out of this fix somehow by strategy. That's the word—strategy! General McClellan thinks he is going to whip the rebels by strategy and the Army has got the same notion. They have no idea that the war is to be carried on and put through by hard, tough fighting, that it will hurt somebody; and no headway is going to be made while this delusion lasts.' "

It was a rather interesting parallel, President Roosevelt remarked, referring specifically to Lincoln's belief that this country had not awakened to the fact we had a war, although it had been going on a whole year.

A reporter asked whether the Chief Executive could disclose whether Mr. Churchill thought that Great Britain could win the war without American help. The President—who said last week after coming ashore in Maine following his Atlantic conferences that this country was no closer to war than before—said that he did not think this was the kind of question that should be answered since it was "headlinary" and without substance.

The President prefaced these assertions by paying tribute to the manner in which the American press had handled rumors of his meeting with Mr. Churchill before the official announcement had been made, and after danger to Mr. Churchill and himself had passed, and the President said that the subsequent accurate reporting had made it unnecessary for him to make a fireside chat explaining the event to the American people. There were one or two highly imaginary accounts of the meetings from London, Mr. Roosevelt asserted, but he thought they were recognized in this country as imaginary.

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and Mr. Churchill had met and that talk of press releases and like details constituted "trivia."

A reporter asked who would determine what was trivia, and the Chief Executive replied to his auditors: "You fellows." 5

The methods followed by President Roosevelt in reporting to the country and congressional leaders on the actions taken at the Atlantic Conference, coupled with the slight information he saw fit to impart, aroused dissatisfaction among interventionists no less than among opponents of involvement in the armed conflict. The eminent publicist Walter Lippmann, eager to get on with the war, while praising the President for his eloquent addresses on the gravity of "our position," deplored the "smart-aleckisms and wisecracks" which deflated his solemn warnings.

The situation in Washington from the interventionist point of view was described in a dispatch from that city, dated August 21, to the London *Times*. This dispatch quoted Mr. Lippmann's strictures on Congress and the President and added a note of anxiety that the mass of the American people were "utterly unaware of the brute reality that they are in fact at war." It also expressed the opinion that the President and other leaders might be at fault in failing to awaken Americans from "the delusion that they are at peace."

An extract from the dispatch follows:

. . . The President had not thought until last night that it would be necessary thus to address Congress, and through Congress the American people. On the present state of Congress, the voice of Mr. Walter Lippmann, as an American, will perhaps carry a greater weight than that of any non-American observer and he says that an "appallingly dangerous and demoralizing and humiliating situation" has developed within that body during the past fortnight.

It is due to the fact (he continues) that in default of high seriousness in the President's leadership of the people, Republican opposition in Congress had decided that it was

politics, even at the risk of disorganizing the army, repudiating its commander, demoralizing the people, and shattering the influence of the United States throughout the world.

No more need be said, and no less can be said of the Republicans. Mr. Lippmann's reference to the President he extends by declaring that the addresses in which Mr. Roosevelt has truthfully, profoundly, and eloquently described "the gravity of our position," have been punctuated and deflated by the subsequent "smart-aleckisms and wisecracks," as though one listened to epoch-making news and appeals to patriotism over the wireless "interspersed with advertisements for soft mattresses and efficient laxatives."

These are hard words, but Mr. Lippmann is not the only American who believes that they are justified. Does the present state of the public mind give them added validity? Certainly it does if the accumulating evidence of conditions in the army camps can be taken as a touchstone—but can they? It would be bitterly unfair to say that to-day they can. What is clear, however, is that in the mass the American people are utterly unaware of the brute reality that they are in fact at war, because in the world of our day they cannot stay out and at the same time save either their material possessions or their freedom of spirit.

They are arming themselves and others; they are deploying their immense economic strength and wide political influence; and they are doing all this in order to defeat a declared enemy. But because they have not fired a shot or dropped a bomb the vast majority of them cling to the delusion that they are at peace. Whether this be the fault of the President and their other leaders, or whether the trouble goes deeper none can say with certainty. 6

Either on his own motion or stirred to action by criticism, President Roosevelt had in fact let it be known on August 20 that he had resolved to address Congress and the American people on the state of foreign affairs. The report aroused great expectancy. At last, it seemed to journalists, a full account of the commitments at the Atlantic Conference

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The message 7 which President Roosevelt presented to Congress on August 21 added nothing whatever to the statements which he had previously made as to the understandings and commitments of the Atlantic Conference. In his first paragraph he said that “over a week ago” he had held several conferences with Mr. Churchill at sea and that on grounds of safety no prior announcement could properly be made. In the second paragraph he referred to the official statement which had been issued on August 14 and commented, “I quote it for the information of Congress and for the record.” Then came a reproduction of that official statement.⁸

In a few brief paragraphs, the President then brought his message to an end. He referred to the Lend-Lease Act and said that the military and naval conversations at the Atlantic meeting had made clear gains “in furthering the effectiveness of this aid”—to the democracies waging war against dictators East and West. He spoke of arrangements for conferences with Soviet Russia on matters of aid in its defense against Germany. In his fifth paragraph he dwelt on the merits of the principles set forth in the Atlantic declaration, said that it “presents a goal which is worth while for our type of civilization to seek,” and maintained that it could not be opposed in any major particular without admitting a willingness to compromise with Nazism or to accept Nazi domination. His sixth paragraph dealt with the untrustworthiness of the written or spoken words of the Nazi Government. He concluded: “It is also unnecessary for me to point out that the [Atlantic] declaration of principles includes of necessity the world need for freedom of religion and freedom of information. No society of the world organized under the announced principles could survive without these freedoms which are a part of the whole freedom for which we strive.”

Such was the official information given, at the time, to the American people by President Roosevelt in respect of the Atlantic Conference. Apparently, according to his accounts

7. Funk, *op. cit.*, pp. 453 f.

of the transactions at sea, the President and Mr. Churchill, aided by their civil and military advisers, had considered operations under the Lend-Lease Act, agreed on condemning Hitlerite Germany and her satellites, arranged for conferences on aiding Russia, and formulated, in a statement of principles, their hopes for a better world to come after the overthrow of Nazi tyranny. Apparently also, according to his reports to the public, the President had made no "new" commitments at the Atlantic Conference and had reached no understandings that brought the United States nearer to war.

More extended and in some respects more explicit than President Roosevelt's report to Congress, August 21, on the Atlantic meeting was Mr. Churchill's explanation to the people of Great Britain, broadcast to the world on August 24, 1941.⁹ The primary importance of the meeting, Mr. Churchill said, lay in the fact that "it symbolizes, in a form and manner which everyone can understand in every land and in every clime, the deep underlying unities which stir and, at decisive moments, rule the English-speaking peoples throughout the world." With regard to origins of the Atlantic Charter, "we had the idea when we met there, the President and I, that without attempting to draw final and formal peace aims, or war aims, it was necessary to give all peoples, and especially the oppressed and conquered peoples, a simple, rough-and-ready war-time statement of the goal towards which the British Commonwealth and the United States mean to make their way, and thus make a way for others. . . ."

In his message to Congress on August 21, President Roosevelt had included the reference of the joint report on the "steps" which the two countries were "respectively taking for

their safety in the face of these [Axis] dangers." Mr. Churchill spoke more boldly: "You will, perhaps, have noticed that the President of the United States and the British representative, in what is aptly called the Atlantic Charter, have jointly pledged their countries to the final destruction of the Nazi

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tyranny. That is a solemn and grave undertaking. It must be made good. It will be made good. And, of course, many practical arrangements to fulfil that purpose have been and are being organized and set in motion."

Premier Churchill was also more precise and clear on the subject of the Japanese negotiations, although he did not put them first on the program of the Atlantic meeting. In his broadcast, he spoke at length of "the carnage, ruin, and corruption" brought about in Asia by the Japanese armies. He said that "they menace by their movements Siam, menace Singapore, the British link with Australasia, and menace the Philippine Islands under the protection of the United States." Then Mr. Churchill struck a resounding note:

It is certain that this has got to stop. Every effort will be made to secure a peaceful settlement. The United States are labouring with infinite patience to arrive at a fair and amicable settlement which will give Japan the utmost reassurance for her legitimate interests. We earnestly hope these negotiations will succeed. But this I must say: that if these hopes should fail we shall, of course, range ourselves unhesitatingly at the side of the United States.

Going beyond the text of Mr. Roosevelt's message to Congress three days earlier, Mr. Churchill declared that there were two distinct and marked differences in this joint declaration and the war aims announced at the latter part of the last world war. "No one should overlook them," he said. "The United States and Great Britain do not now assume that there will never be any more war again. On the contrary, we intend to take ample precaution to prevent its renewal in any period we can foresee by effectively disarming the guilty nations while remaining suitably protected ourselves."

The second difference between the war aims, Mr. Churchill explained, "is this: that instead of trying to ruin German trade by all kinds of additional trade barriers and hindrances, as was the mood of 1917, we have definitely adopted the view that it is not in the interests of the world and of our two countries that any large nation should be

the means of making a decent living for itself and its people by its industry and enterprise.”

Near the end of his broadcast on August 24, Mr. Churchill came to the supreme issue that was uppermost in the minds of the British people: When is the United States coming into the war for the destruction of Nazi tyranny? He took cognizance of it by saying: “The question has been asked: ‘How near is the United States to war?’ ” In answering the question he intimated that the United States was already in action: “There is certainly one man who knows the answer to that question. If Hitler has not yet declared war upon the United States it is surely not out of his love for American institutions. It is certainly not because he could not find a pretext. He has murdered half a dozen countries for far less.” In closing, the Prime Minister exclaimed: “I felt that hard and terrible and long-drawn out as this struggle may be, we shall not be denied the strength to do our duty to the end.”

Although Mr. Churchill’s exposition of the transactions at the Atlantic Conference was cautious, it implied that President Roosevelt was committing enough acts of hostility against Germany to warrant Hitler in making war on the United States. But the President’s own statements on the conference lent little countenance to the view that the United States was already at war or in the war. He referred to Japanese aggressions as possible auguries of war; and, as if by analogy, in quoting President Lincoln’s lines on Civil War times, he hinted broadly that Americans in August, 1941, had better recognize

the fact that they were in the war. But the President also said that the country was no closer to war as a result of decisions at the Atlantic Conference and that no new commitments had been made at the meeting. Accordingly, it appeared, late in August, 1941, that apart from arrangements for lend-lease operations, agreement on the noble principles of the Atlantic Charter, and discussions of numerous world issues, nothing had been done at the conference which bound the United States to take more vigorous actions definitely pointed in the direction of war.

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American advocates of immediate war on Hitler, unless they had inside information about the conference, derived small comfort from President Roosevelt's statements on its transactions. Nor were American opponents of war in any better position, however deep and inveterate their suspicions. They could find in his words no evidence that he had entered into agreements with Mr. Churchill in the nature of an alliance for parallel diplomatic pressure on Japan or for military or naval cooperation against one or all of the Axis Powers. While adding to national bewilderment over patrolling and convoying, President Roosevelt's reports to the people after the Atlantic Conference allowed the undiscriminating to keep on cherishing the hope that he was or might be striving to keep the country out of war, with prospects of success.

There was, of course, the Atlantic Charter which, the President had said in his message to Congress, August 21, included of necessity the world need for freedom of religion and "free dom of information." In imposing appearances it seemed to be the most meaningful statement that had emerged from the conference. But in British opinion it was no substitute for an American Expeditionary Force to be employed in the invasion of the Continent; and to Americans eager to have the President move quickly in the direction of an all-out war on Hitler it offered little promise. If invincible optimists could see in the Charter a splendid plan for a beneficent world order to come, informed skeptics with memories going back to World War I could recall the unhappy fate of President Wilson's Fourteen Points and were more inclined to jeer,¹⁰ or at least discount, the Charter than to applaud the new pronouncement in respect of blessings to be conferred on man kind after World War II. In net result, therefore, the appearances of the Atlantic Conference did little to free the President from his peace covenants of 1940 and to promote national unity for participation in the war, if such had been his purpose in planning and advertising his meeting with Prime Minister Churchill.

¹⁰ *Washington Post*, December 10, 1940; *Washington Post*.

CHAPTER V

"In Case of Attack" in the Atlantic

ACCORDING to President Roosevelt's reports to Congress and the Press, no new commitments had been made at the Atlantic Conference, nor was the country any closer to war. Not even an appearance of retreat from the peace and neutrality pledges of 1940 had been indicated by the President's public announcements on his return home. Americans eager to have their country get into the fight at once were dissatisfied. Clark Eichelberger, distinguished advocate of world peace, speaking for the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, expressed disappointment "that a plan of action against Hitler had not been made," and then he declared: "We must point out with all possible vigor that the United States will have a right to participate in the building of the future world peace if it will make its full contribution to the defeat of the aggressors. Consequently our participation in the conflict should be speeded up."¹

THE TROUBLESOME "ESCAPE" CLAUSE

It is possible that Mr. Eichelberger, in demanding that "our participation in the conflict be speeded up," was speaking in the name of President Roosevelt; for, during the previous months managers of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies had covertly kept in touch with the Administration and, with its approval, had acted as propaganda agents in creating favorable public sentiment for its projects in advance of official announcements respecting them from Washington.² In other words, when President Roosevelt wished to

1. Johnson, *The Battle against Isolation*, p. 218.

2. The inside story of the committee's secret relations with President Roosevelt, Secretary Hull, and other members of the Administration in "softening up" the people for participation in the war is told with gusto by the historian of the

make one of his "complicated moves" he sometimes privately cooperated with this committee in the business of stirring up an agitation for the move before he deemed the time ripe to make an official acknowledgment of it.

President Roosevelt, however, was not free to make a public demand, in Mr. Eichelberger's style, for speeding up "our participation" in the conflict. The antiwar plank of the Democratic platform, to which he had committed himself in the campaign of 1940, read: "We will not participate in foreign wars . . . except in case of attack." *3 Under this obligation, if such obligations publicly assumed had any moral force, President Roosevelt could call upon the country and Congress to "participate" in the war only in case of an attack. Of this covenant the President was poignantly conscious, for he repeatedly referred to the word "attack" in his public addresses and statements during the year 1941 and more than once he sought to interpret it out of existence as a restraint upon his powers, by giving it an illimitable definition.

To most members of the Democratic convention at Chicago who accepted and approved this conditional antiwar plank, and probably to most American citizens who read it, the plank had a plain meaning. It meant and could only mean to scrupulous minds that, if the Democrats were victorious in the coming election, they would not allow the United States Government to participate in foreign wars, unless American territory, shipping, or other possessions were made the object of an unwarranted, unprovoked attack by the armed forces of some foreign power. In case of such an attack, the President had power, on his own motion, to use the armed forces of the United States to repel the assault or invasion,⁴ and could call upon Congress for a declaration of war. In the absence of such an attack, on the other hand, if he deemed war against a for-

versity of Chicago Press, as if in a novel interpretation of the functions of scholarship, declared: "Isolationism, which here stands condemned by its own lies, must not have another chance." See the jacket of the book.

3. For origin and nature of the antiwar plank, see Beard, *op. cit.*, pp. 291 fl.

4. See, for instance, the opinion of Mr. Justice Grier in the Prize Cases, 2 Black,

eign government to be necessary and proper owing to changed circumstances or for any other reason,⁵ he was bound by his commitment to the plank and by the Constitution to appeal to Congress for a legal sanction to employ the armed forces in war, inside and outside of the Americas.

It is possible, of course, that President Roosevelt entertained a disingenuous view of the conditional clause, "except in case of attack," when he bound himself to the antiwar plank during the campaign of 1940. The words had been added to the original draft of the plank on the insistence of his representatives at the Democratic convention and he may have then thought that thereby the antiwar part of the covenant would be or could be rendered innocuous by explication. In any case, however, during the campaign of 1940, the President made no public interpretation of the conditional clause which indicated that he might, after all, have some *arriere-pensee* in respect of it, that he contemplated reducing it to an absurdity by giving it a capricious definition hitherto unknown to lexicography, international law, or diplomacy.

If the President had in 1940 no reservations respecting the meaning of the term "attack," he acquired them sometime in 1941, certainly as early as May 27, for, in a public address on that day, he declared in effect that an attack calling for defensive action on the part of the United States did not necessarily mean a warlike assault by a foreign power on anything belonging to the United States but could "begin by the domination of any base which menaces our security—north or south":

I have said on many occasions that the United States is mustering its men and its resources only for purposes of defense-only to repel attack. I repeat that statement now. But we must be realistic when we use the word "attack"; we have to relate it to the lightening speed of modern warfare.

must learn from the fate of every nation that the Nazis have conquered.

The attack on Czechoslovakia began with the conquest of Austria. The attack on Norway began with the occupation of Denmark. The attack on Greece began with occupation of Albania and Bulgaria. The attack on the Suez Canal began with the invasion of the Balkans and North Africa. The attack on the United States can begin with the domination of any base which menaces our security—north or south.

Nobody can foretell tonight just when the acts of the dictators will ripen into attack on this hemisphere and us. But we know enough by now to realize that it would be suicide to wait until they are in our front yard.

When your enemy comes at you in a tank or a bombing plane, if you hold your fire until you see the whites of his eyes, you will never know what hit you. Our Bunker Hill of tomorrow may be several thousand miles from Boston.

Anyone with an atlas and a reasonable knowledge of the sudden striking force of modern war knows that it is stupid to wait until a probable enemy has gained a foothold from which to attack. Old-fashioned common sense calls for the use of a strategy which will prevent such an enemy from gaining a foothold in the first place.

We have, accordingly, extended our patrol in North and South Atlantic waters. We are steadily adding more and more ships and planes to that patrol. It is well known that the strength of the Atlantic fleet has been greatly increased during the past year, and is constantly being built up. 6

Approaching the troublesome word “attack” more boldly in July, 1941,⁷ President Roosevelt attenuated the interpretation of it which he had given on May 27, 1941. As if recalling the language of the antiwar plank and yet without mentioning it by name, he spoke of the very idea as now obsolete. “There was a time,” he said, “when we could afford to say that we would not fight unless attacked”; and he immediately added: “Modern techniques of warfare have changed all that.” Here he seemed to be contending that the Democratic pledge

6. Funk, *Roosevelt's Foreign Policy, 1933-1941*, pp. 399 f. (Italics supplied.)

against war "except in case of attack" was out of date when made in 1940 or had become untenable since that year or did not mean what it seemed to mean. The President's exegesis of July, 1941, read:

Modern warfare has given us a new definition for that word "attack." There was a time when we could afford to say that we would not fight unless attacked, and then wait until the physical attack came upon us before starting to shoot. Modern techniques of warfare have changed all that. An attack today is a very different thing. An attack today begins as soon as any base has been occupied from which our security is threatened. That base may be thousands of miles away from our own shores. The American Government must, of necessity, decide at which point any threat of attack against this hemisphere has begun; and to make their stand when that point has been reached.

Evidently, President Roosevelt did not in July, 1941, regard the word "attack" as necessarily implying an act of war at all against the United States—a physical assault in the form of shooting at or bombing the territory, shipping, or other possessions of the United States; for he said: "An attack *begins* as soon as *any base* has been occupied from which *our security is threatened.*" (Italics supplied.) Since he added that this base might be thousands of miles away from our shores, he evidently meant that he could regard an attack on the United States as *beginning*, that is, as constituting an attack, if made on the territory of some foreign country thousands of miles away from the United States, not on any possessions of the United States. If this is what the word "attack," as used in the conditional clause of the Democratic antiwar plank, was actually intended to convey by its authors—representatives of President Roosevelt at Chicago—then it is noteworthy that no such explanation of the term was offered to the public by the President during his campaign of 1940 for the votes of the American people.

Although the interpretation of the word "attack" announced publicly by the President in July, 1941, seemed explicit in itself, the last sentence of his statement bearing on

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action to be taken by the United States “in case of attack,” was really open to diversity of constructions. There, he said, *the American Government* must, of necessity, decide at which point *any threat* of attack against this hemisphere has *begun*, and to *make “their” stand* when that point has been reached. In ordinary usage the words “the American Government” mean the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Departments of the federal system. Under the Constitution this is the proper usage; for the Constitution, Article I, Section 8, so indicates in speaking of the “powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.”

Did President Roosevelt intend to include Congress in his conception when he thus spoke of “the American Government”? Or was he referring to the Executive alone? Did he intend to imply that a mere *threat* of an attack on *this hemisphere*, as distinguished from an attack, would, of necessity, bring about American armed action against the authors of the threat? The text of his statement afforded no answers to these pertinent questions. Not until some of his “complicated moves” in the autumn of 1941 had produced results did President Roosevelt give intimations of the realities covered by his conception of the word “attack.”

APPEARANCES AND REALITIES OF THE ATTACK ON THE U.S.S.

Greer (September)

The hopes of those who were working to speed up American participation in the war by aiding the Allies were raised to a high pitch in September, 1941, not by an Executive appeal to Congress for a declaration of war on Hitler, but by events at sea. On September 4, the Navy Department announced that a submarine of undetermined nationality had attacked the American destroyer *Greer* that morning in the Atlantic on its way to Iceland; that torpedoes had been fired at the vessel; that the *Greer* had counterattacked by dropping depth charges, with unknown results. The destroyer, the department explained, was operating as a part of the Atlantic patrol established during the summer by President Roosevelt and was

carrying mail. Was this the "attack" 8 that would emancipate President Roosevelt from his commitment to the Democratic plank of 1940 against participating in foreign wars "except in case of attack"?

On September 5, cables from Iceland reported that the *Greer* had arrived safely, that the incident was described as a German attack, and that the destroyer had been aided in repelling the attack by British aircraft, cooperating in the reconnaissance. It was also announced in the press that President Roosevelt had issued orders to the Navy to search out and "eliminate" the submarine which attacked the *Greer*, and that he considered the attack as deliberate. The President hinted that it might have been the work of a German submarine.

From Berlin came a German official version of the affair. The German version asserted that the attack had not been initiated by the German submarine; on the contrary, it contended, the submarine had been attacked with depth bombs, pursued continuously in the German blockade zone, and as sailed by depth bombs until midnight. The German statement concluded: "Roosevelt thereby is endeavoring with all the means at his disposal to provoke incidents for the purpose of baiting the American people into the war." The Navy Department quickly denied the German allegations and stated that the initial attack in the engagement had been made by the German submarine.

For days the war of words went on in the press, American and Axis, while anxious observers in the United States waited for an official statement by President Roosevelt. The statement came on September 11 in the form of a radio broadcast.

The *Greer*, the President said, "was carrying American mail to Iceland. She was flying the American flag. Her identity as an American ship was unmistakable. She was then and there attacked by a submarine. Germany admits that it was a German submarine . . . I tell you the blunt fact that the German submarine fired first upon this American destroyer without

warning, and with deliberate design to sink her"—at a point southeast of Greenland.

"We have sought no shooting war with Hitler," the President continued.

We do not seek it now. . . . In the waters which we deem necessary for our defense, American naval vessels and American planes will no longer wait until Axis submarines lurking under water, or Axis raiders on the surface of the sea, strike their deadly blow—first. . . . The aggression is not ours. Ours is solely defense. But let this warning be clear. From now on, if German or Italian vessels of war enter the waters, the protection of which is necessary for American defense, they do so at their own peril. The orders which I have given as Commander in Chief to the United States Army and Navy are to carry out that policy—at once. . . . There will be no shooting unless Germany continues to seek it.

. . . I have no illusions about the gravity of this step. . . . It is the result of months and months of constant thought and anxiety and prayer. . . .*

But, while the President stated that the Navy would not wait for Axis vessels to strike first, he did not invoke the escape clause of the Democratic antiwar plank and call upon Congress to authorize war; he announced, in effect, that as Commander in Chief, he was directing affairs relative to shooting in the Atlantic. Nor, indeed, were signs in Washington propitious for an invocation of the clause; for alert journalists and members of Congress in the City of Rumors thought they had ground for believing that the President's account of the attack on the *Greer*, if not false, was lacking in exactitude and comprehensiveness. Stirred by the allegations and counter allegations, the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs prepared to hold a hearing on the attack and sent a list of pointed questions to Admiral Harold R. Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, designed to secure a full official record of the *Greer* case.

In a letter to Senator David I. Walsh, chairman of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, dated September 20, 1941, Admiral Stark enclosed a statement giving what he believed

to be "a good picture of what happened" and answers to the questions. Although Admiral Stark's letter, statement, and answers were not made public until late in October, 1941, the tenor of his reply was immediately disclosed to some members of Congress and it added fuel to the fire of opposition to President Roosevelt's methods and policies. Had the President made use of the *Greer* case in an appeal to Congress after September

11 for a declaration of war to implement the escalator clause, these documents, it was known in congressional circles, would be used as ammunition by his critics. Indeed, after the President on October 9, 1941, called upon Congress for another step in legislation—an act to permit the arming of American merchant ships—Admiral Stark's papers on the *Greer* were inserted in the *Congressional Record* and thus made public before the next "case of attack." 10

Admiral Stark's report to the Senate Committee, which filled several typewritten pages presented an account of the *Greer* affair which made the President's statement of the case to the nation on September 11 appear in some respects inadequate, and, in others, incorrect. The following summary gives the essential facts of the *Greer* incident as supplied by Admiral Stark to the Senate Committee:

While en route to Iceland with mail, passengers, and some freight, the *Greer* was informed by a British plane of the presence of a submerged submarine about ten miles directly ahead.

Acting on this information from the British plane, the *Greer* proceeded to trail the submarine, broadcasting its position.

This chase of the submarine went on for over three hours; the British plane dropped four depth charges in the vicinity of the submarine and departed, leaving the *Greer* to continue the hunt, zigzagging and searching.

The *Greer* thus had held contact with the submarine for three hours and twenty-eight minutes; the submarine fired a torpedo which crossed the *Greer* about 100 yards astern.

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Then the *Greer* “attacked the submarine with a pattern of eight depth charges”; to which the submarine replied with another torpedo that missed the *Greer*.

After losing sound contact at this time with the submarine, the *Greer* started searching for it, made contact again about two hours later, and “attacked immediately with depth charges,” without discoverable results.

The *Greer* thereupon continued its search for about three hours more and proceeded to its destination, Iceland.

APPEARANCES AND REALITIES OF THE ATTACK ON THE U.S.S.

Kearny (October–November)

About six weeks after the attack on the *Greer*, while Congress had before it a measure to authorize the arming of American merchant ships on recommendation of President Roosevelt,¹¹ another serious attack on an American war vessel was reported in the news—an attack far more distressing in terms of death and suffering than the attack on the *Greer*. On October 17, 1941, the Navy Department announced that the U.S.S. *Kearny* “was torpedoed this morning while on patrol duty about 350 miles south and west of Iceland.” Although the President declined to issue any statement on this new case until all the facts were in, he said that the *Kearny* was within the American defense zone when torpedoed and that orders to shoot on sight German and Italian raiders in waters vital to American defense were still unchanged. At a press conference, Secretary Hull described German attacks as acts of piracy and attempted frightfulness as a part of a general world movement of conquest.¹²

After a brief period of silence in Berlin, a German radio broadcast denied responsibility and declared that there was not a word of truth in the story that a German submarine had torpedoed the *Kearny*. October 19, the Navy Department announced that the *Kearny*, attacked by a submarine, undoubtedly German, had reached port, with eleven members of the

11. See below, Chap. VI.

12. *New York Times*, October 18, 1941, pp. 1-3.

crew missing and several men injured. When asked the next day about any plans for making an official protest to the German Government, Secretary Hull "remarked acidly that one did not very often send diplomatic notes to an international highwayman." 13

On October 27, 1941, President Roosevelt delivered a long and vehement address 14 to the nation on the subject of Axis attacks on American ships, dwelling at length on the *Kearny* case, and defied the Axis Powers: "All we Americans have cleared our decks and taken our battle stations." After opening briefly with references to previous attacks, the President took up the new case:

Five months ago tonight I proclaimed to the American people the existence of a state of unlimited emergency.

Since then much has happened. Our Army and Navy are temporarily in Iceland in the defense of the Western Hemisphere. Hitler has attacked shipping in areas close to the Americas in the North and South Atlantic.

Many American-owned merchant ships have been sunk on the high seas. One American destroyer was attacked on September 4. Another destroyer was attacked and hit on October 17. Eleven brave and loyal men of our Navy were killed by the Nazis.

We have wished to avoid shooting. But the shooting has started. And history has recorded who fired the first shot.¹⁵ In the long run, however, all that will matter is who fired the last shot.

America has been attacked. The U.S.S. *Kearny* is not just a Navy ship. She belongs to every man, woman, and child in this Nation.

Illinois, Alabama, California, North Carolina, Ohio, Louisiana, Texas, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Arkansas, New York, Virginia—these are the home States of the honored dead and wounded of the *Kearny*. Hitler's torpedo was directed at every American, whether he lives on our seacoasts or in the innermost part of the Nation, far from the sea and far from the guns and tanks of the marching hordes of would-be

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The purpose of Hitler's attack was to frighten the American people off the high seas—to force us to make a trembling retreat. This is not the first time he has misjudged the American spirit. That spirit is now aroused.

If our national policy were to be dominated by the fear of shooting, then all of our ships and those of our sister republics would have to be tied up in home harbors. Our Navy would have to remain respectfully—abjectly—behind any line which Hitler might decree on any ocean as his own dictated version of his own war zone.

Naturally, we reject that absurd and insulting suggestion. We reject it because of our own self-interest, because of our own self-respect, because, most of all, of our own good faith. Freedom of the seas is now, as it has always been, a fundamental policy of your Government and mine. . . .

After giving his version of the *Kearny* case and declaring that America had been attacked, President Roosevelt announced measures of retaliation:

Our determination not to take it lying down has been expressed in the orders to the American Navy to shoot on sight. Those orders stand. Furthermore, the House of Representatives has already voted to amend part of the Neutrality Act of 1937, today outmoded by force of violent circumstances. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations has also recommended elimination of other hamstringing provisions in that Act. That is the course of honesty and of realism. . . . It can never be doubted that the goods *will* be delivered by this nation, whose Navy believes in the tradition of "Damn the torpedoes; full speed ahead!"

There was great rejoicing in the White House on the day after President Roosevelt's address on October 27. His secretary, Stephen Early, stated that a flood of messages was coming in and that they were favorable in a ratio of about eight to one. Evidently advocates of war for the United States were under the impression that the great day for which they had so longed had come at last.

"America has been attacked" were, indeed, electric words

They were immediately taken by journalists in Washington and other close observers to mean that President Roosevelt had cast off the shackles of the antiwar and pro-neutrality pledges he had made to the nation. Arthur Krock, one of the best informed journalists in the Capital and a shrewd inquirer into the significance of White House announcements, said in his column headed "America Attacked," under the date line of October 28: "Four words in the President's Navy Day speech last night are being accepted here today as his own evidence in rebuttal of the charge that his present foreign policy violates the Democratic platform of 1940 and his anti war campaign pledges in that same year. The words were: 'America has been attacked.' "

After referring to the President's radio address of September 11, 1941, and his assignment of the "first shot" to invaders of the American defense waters, Mr. Krock went on to say:

But not until his Navy Day speech [of October 27] did the President make use of phraseology which leads back to the 1940 Democratic platform plank and those campaign utterances his critics have since charged him with violating. Therefore the general conclusion is that last night the President made his official defense for the present generation and for the judgment of his tory. . . . The key to the historical importance of the utterance is identified here as the word "attacked."

Thereupon, Mr. Krock gave an inside history of the way in which Senator James F. Byrnes, "who was representing the President" in the drafting of the platform at the Democratic convention of 1940, held up the antiwar plank and procured the addition of the words "except in case of attack." 18 Mr. Krock added: "Now the President has officially declared that 'America has been attacked.' Therefore, by the very text of the platform pledge, the promise against dispatch of our armed forces 'outside the Americas' as well as the rest of the promise can be held to be automatically cancelled. In this

further steps away from the remainder of the platform plank are consistent with the full text.”

But there remained the President’s pledge against participation in “foreign” wars. Mr. Krock took note of it and reported that this word was no longer deemed an obstacle: “As for the word ‘foreign’ Mrs. Roosevelt and others close to the President have already said that, since the European war is no longer ‘foreign’ to our interest, our activity in it would not be activity in a ‘foreign’ war.”

Notwithstanding this authoritative explication by Mrs. Roosevelt and others close to President Roosevelt, there remained also for consideration certain outstanding and categorical peace pledges made by the President personally during the campaign. Mr. Krock cited two of them—the Boston pledge of October 30, 1940: “Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign war”; and the fireside chat of December, 1940: “You can therefore nail any talk of sending armies to Europe as a deliberate untruth.”

These statements, too, Mr. Krock declared, “can, on the basis of this reasoning [about attack and foreign war] and the complete platform text, be held equally consistent with steps since taken or any of their logical consequences.”

In this presentation of the case, on October 28, Mr. Krock seemed to be supporting the President’s “official defense for the present generation and for the judgment of history.” He seemed to be saying likewise that the steps taken by the President in the direction of war since 1940 or “any of their logical consequences” (which certainly included a call upon Congress for a declaration of war) could be held “consistent” with the pledges and declarations of 1940.

Having applied his line of interpretation to other antiwar statements by the President, Mr. Krock said: “This reasoning can be disputed during the development of our anti-aggressor policy, just as it has been disputed up to now. The factual argument over what constitutes initiating ‘attack,’ as in the instance of the U.S.S. *Greer*, may continue over the U.S.S. *Kearny’s* experience if the full report shall show a

preliminaries"; that is, shall show that the American destroyer had chased or attacked the German submarine first.¹⁷

Mr. Krock closed his elaborate argument for President Roosevelt's strategy, as presented to his generation and the bar of history to come, with the words: "But it now appears that, when 'attack' is conceded in any episode, the challenge of the critics will be met by the five immensely important words ['except in case of attack'] Mr. Byrnes caused to be added to the 1940 platform."

The next day, October 29, while the words, "America has been attacked," were still reverberating in the country, Secretary Knox made public a formal report on the way in which the *Kearny* had been attacked. In his address of October 27 on the *Kearny* case, President Roosevelt had said: "We have wished to avoid shooting. But the shooting has started. And history has recorded who fired the first shot." The report by Secretary Knox two days later read:

On the night of October 16-17 the U.S.S. *Kearny* while escorting a convoy of merchant ships received distress signals from another convoy which was under attack from several submarines. The

U.S.S. *Kearny* proceeded to the aid of the attacked convoy. On arriving at the scene of the attack the U.S.S. *Kearny* dropped depth bombs when she sighted a merchant ship under attack by a submarine. Some time afterward three torpedo tracks were observed approaching the U.S.S. *Kearny*. One passed ahead of the ship, one astern, and the third struck the U.S.S. *Kearny* on the starboard side in the vicinity of the forward fire room. . . . The

U.S.S. *Kearny* was forced out of action by the explosion.¹⁸

The rejoicing of President Roosevelt's supporters over what seemed to be a sure case of an attack that meant war for the United States, at long last, proved to be premature; for the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, remembering its experiences in the *Greer* case, immediately gave attention to the

¹⁷ *New York Times*, October 29, 1941, p. 4. Perhaps Mr. Krock was not at

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case of the *Kearny*, and managed to get some of the facts in that affair from Admiral Stark, Chief of Naval Operations. Although the committee made no public report on these facts at once, news of its findings “leaked” out and spread among members of Congress and their friends.¹⁹ The leaks indicated that the *Kearny* was actually on convoy duty ²⁰ at the time of the shooting and had been engaged at length in fighting a pack of German submarines before she was hit by a torpedo. Such facts were not released to the press by the committee until early in December,²¹ but leaks and rumors in Washington completely dashed interventionist hopes that the *Kearny* attack would now bring full-fledged war in the Atlantic.

Other shootings and sinkings occurred in the Atlantic. Two of the most flagrant cases were those of the tanker *Salinas* on October 30, 1941, and the *Reuben James* on the night of October 30-31. But President Roosevelt did not make as much

19. See Arthur Krock's statement, below, pp. 150 ff.

20. Asked at a secret hearing of a Senate Committee, October 27, 1941, whether American vessels were convoying ships, Secretary Hull replied: “That is my guess.” When Senator Wheeler made the charge that the Navy was convoying ships across the Atlantic to Great Britain, Secretary Knox declared: “That statement is not true.” *Ibid.*, October 28 and November 20, 1941.

21. The following account of the Senate Committee's report to Congress was published in the *New York Times*, December 4, 1941:

“The destroyer *Kearny* fought nearly three hours against a pack of German submarines before she was hit by a torpedo, an official Navy report to Congress revealed today. . . .

“The Navy report—a letter from Admiral Harold R. Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, to Chairman David I. Walsh, Democrat, of Massachusetts, of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee—said the *Kearny* was on convoy duty, and ‘a number’ of merchant ships were damaged ‘and some of them sunk during the battle.’

“Admiral Stark said that although United States vessels were in the convoy ‘it may be stated . . . that no United States flag merchant ship was sunk at this time.’

“Senator Walsh, who had asked for answers to a series of questions on the *Kearny* incident, released Admiral Stark's report without comment, except to say that so far as the Senate's efforts to obtain information were concerned ‘the *Kearny* incident is closed.’

“He said, however, that he had written Admiral Stark asking for similar information about the sinking of the destroyer *Reuben James*, which went down off Iceland with a loss of 100 officers and men.

“Senator Walsh had told Admiral Stark that information on the *Kearny* should be made public ‘since it has become impossible to keep secret from the press the proceedings of committees of the Senate.’ He waived replies that would reveal military or naval secrets. . . .”

of these two cases as he had made of the *Greer* and *Kearny* cases. When asked on October 31, 1941, whether the sinking of the *Reuben James* would lead to the breaking of diplomatic relations with Germany, he "indicated surprise." The reporter inquired: "Will this first actual sinking make any difference in the international relations of the United States?" The President replied that he "did not think so—the destroyer was merely carrying out its assigned task." Asked whether Berlin had cause to worry about some of its submarines that had encountered our Navy, "The President suggested that the reporter go to a good psychiatrist." 22 Thus the electric words "America has been attacked," instead of setting off the real war in the Atlantic, fizzled out in an anticlimax. If President Roosevelt had actually been seeking war in the Atlantic by exploiting German "attacks," he had apparently exhausted the possibilities of that expedient by November 1, 1941.

THE ATTACK IN THE ATLANTIC FAILS TO MATERIALIZE

About this point in the "series of complicated moves," in which President Roosevelt "so skilfully conducted affairs as to avoid even the appearance of an act of aggression on our part," many supporters of his "moves" and advocates of full participation by the United States in the war became dissatisfied with his conduct of affairs. Arthur Krock was among them. In his column of October 28, 1941, immediately after President Roosevelt had declared "America has been attacked," Mr. Krock had said: "Therefore the general conclusion is that last night the President [in his address of October 27] made his official defense for the present generation and for the judgment of history"; and Mr. Krock had added: "It now ap-

22. *Ibid.*, November 1, 1941. Later reports indicated: the *Salinas* and three American freighters were in a convoy accompanied by five American destroyers, joined on the voyage by thirty-eight British ships, most of them tankers; American naval vessels took up the task of escorting the convoy at a given point after British war vessels turned back; German submarines attacked the convoy and a general engagement ensued; the *Reuben James* came to the aid of the *Salinas*; later the *Reuben James* was sunk in an engagement. *New York Times*, November 1, 5,

pears that, when 'attack' is conceded in any episode, the challenge of the critics will be met by the five immensely important words Mr. Byrnes caused to be added to the 1940 platform"—except in case of attack.

As an informed and competent exponent of the foreign policy espoused by the *New York Times*, Mr. Krock evidently had been convinced on October 28, 1941, that President Roosevelt had secured the "attack" with which to make his war case for that generation and the judgment of history. But a few days later Mr. Krock became indignant at the President for not taking full advantage of the opportunity presented by the attacks, for obscuring the issues, and for failing to tell the truth. In an address before the alumni of Columbia College on November 5, 1941, Mr. Krock said:

. . . Lately the President and Hitler have had another argument. Some weeks ago the U.S.S. Destroyer *Greer* was the target of a German submarine torpedo that missed. Then the U.S.S. Destroyer *Kearny* was the target of a German torpedo that struck, but only wounded. More recently the U.S.S. *Reuben James* was the target of a German torpedo that killed. The argument is over who "attacked" whom.

An "attack" means an onset, an aggressive initiation of combat, a move which is the antithesis of "defense." Let's face it, Mr. President. Americans are grown up now. In that definition, all three of our destroyers attacked the German submarines. Like the British who went after Fuzzy-Wuzzy in the Sudan, the Navy can say: "Our orders were to break you, an' of course we went and did."

The U.S.S. *Greer* was informed by a British naval plane that a submarine lay ten miles ahead in her path. The British plane then went back and "attacked" the submarine. The *Greer* gave chase to the submarine, broadcasting its location on the way. The submarine, when the *Greer* came in range, then tried its best to sink the *Greer*.

The U.S.S. *Kearny* was on convoy duty in the same waters. She responded to a distress signal from a convoy which a pack of submarines had attacked. Her errand was to find the pack and destroy it. While so engaged, a submarine fought back and for

pedo hit the mark and eleven American Navy men were killed. The U.S.S. *Reuben James* was with a convoy and went on call to the aid of another which German submarines had engaged. A submarine sank our destroyer, with what loss of American life is yet unknown. I believe the full log will demonstrate that as soon as the *Reuben James* came into the area infested by the submarines she tried to finish them. She, too, attacked. Certainly I hope so. The Navy some time ago was ordered by the President to "shoot on sight." The Navy neither misunderstands the orders of its Commander in Chief nor is loutish in executing them.

So, in my opinion, Hitler can throw at us both the dictionary and the facts when he says we "attacked" him. Why should the American Government ever have attempted to obscure it? If the Navy had not done what it did the United States would have been guilty of the most heart-breaking bluff ever made by a great nation.

Yet our government did attempt to obscure it, as the record shows.

In his press conference of Sept. 5 (I quote from *New York Times* Washington dispatches, and I guarantee their accuracy): "The Executive made clear that he believed the attack on the American vessel (the *Greer*) was deliberate, and that he considered it no less serious because the destroyer had evaded destruction and answered with depth charges. The attempt to sink the *Greer* took place in daylight when visibility was good, the President declared, and more than one attack was made by the submarine."

From a Washington dispatch to the same newspaper, Sept. 6: "The Navy Department declined to comment on the German Government's charge that the submarine was merely trying to defend itself. A spokesman called attention to the Navy Department's original announcement: that the initial attack was made by the submarine on the *Greer*." From Berlin the same day, had come this: "The German contention is that the sub fired on the *Greer* only after having been pursued for two hours."

Then on Oct. 14 were disclosed the actual facts as I stated them before: The scout work of the British plane; its return to drop depth charges; the pursuit and broadcast by the *Greer*. How were these facts obtained? The Navy did not volunteer

leading. They were obtained because a Senate Committee demanded them.

On Oct. 17 a *Times* dispatch carried another statement from the Navy about another destroyer. It announced that the U.S.S. *Kearny* was torpedoed while on "patrol duty." Three days later members of the same Senate committee that elicited the true story of the *Greer* told the press the *Kearny* was not on patrol, but on convoy duty. Seven days later, at a press conference, the President asserted that this was true. The *Kearny* was on convoy and not on patrol duty at all.

By the time the *Reuben James* was sunk the government had apparently come to the conclusion that the Navy should no longer be left in the position of obscuring the facts or giving out only part of the story. That time the truth was published at once, in the tradition of the United States Navy. I do not blame that great service for any of the faults of omission I have recounted.

The blame, as I see it, is at the door of the Administration. Perhaps the straightforward account of the sinking of the *Reuben James* opens a new and worthier chapter in the official book. . . . When Senator Walsh's committee and a few inquisitive news paper men finally elicited all the pertinent facts about the encounters of the *Greer* and the *Kearny*, some of those who seem to think that our foreign policy must be publicly justified by proving an unprovoked German "attack" shifted back to the sinking of the *Robin Moor*. That sinking was brutally done; those rescued owe their lives to chance, not to the Nazi commander; and certainly the *Robin Moor* was "attacked." But the attack was not unprovoked. Some weeks before the lease-lend bill had become law. From that moment, whatever the political quibblers may say, we were committed to the military defeat of Ger

many. . . .2S

Now American men are giving their lives that this armament may reach its destination. To their memories, and to their brothers in arms who may die tomorrow, to the grown-up American nation they are defending, the Administration and Congress owe a solemn obligation: the truth. In wartime, for excellent reasons, it cannot always be the whole truth. But always it should be nothing but the truth 24

Both explicitly and implicitly, Mr. Krock's line in his address of November 5, 1941, was clear and frank. It was the line taken by the *New York Times* and many other advocates of American participation in the war at various points in time after the Lend-Lease Act had been safely passed and signed, March 11. The line was that the act authorized the President to do anything he deemed necessary to inflict a military defeat on Germany, including a resort to open war, and that the measure committed the people of the United States irrevocably to such authorization.

Where can warrant be found for this interpretation of the act in the history of its passage, in President Roosevelt's own statements while it was up for consideration by Congress, and in the averments of its Democratic sponsors in Congress during the debates on it? If there was one thing that President Roosevelt and the Democratic leaders in Congress then categorically denied, it was the contention of critics that the loose language of the bill would allow the President to claim the power to wage war under its terms.²⁵

In view of the history of the Lend-Lease Bill, if the act as finally passed in March, 1941, was a declaration of war or an

25. In 1944, Arthur Hays Sulzberger, president and publisher of the *New York Times*, interpreted the Lend-Lease Act as a warlike act by which the United States went to war. Speaking in New York City, January 31, 1944, Mr. Sulzberger said: "I happen to be among those who believe that we did not go to war because we were attacked at Pearl Harbor. I hold rather that we were attacked at Pearl Harbor because we had gone to war when we made the Lend-Lease declaration. And we took the fateful step because we knew that all we hold dear in the world was under attack and that we could not let it perish. That declaration was an affirmative act on our part and a warlike act, and we made it because we knew that freedom must be defended wherever it is attacked or we who possess it will lose it." *Washington Times-Herald*, February 1, 1944, P-2- reply to an inquiry, Mr. Sulzberger informed me, October 22, 1945, that the quotation is accurate.

In an address to the alumni of Brown University, June 19, 1944, Mr. Sulzberger stated: "I believe that we willed our participation in this war—that we went into it affirmatively when we signed the Lease-Lend Act; that we chose our course deliberately because we knew that our future could not be as we had mapped it unless we halted the aggressor as quickly as we could." *New York Times*, June 20, 1944. For what President Roosevelt and the Democratic sponsors of the Lend-Lease Bill in Congress told the people of the United States about the nature and intention of the measure, see above Chap. II. Nor did the *New York Times* in its editorial on the act, March 12, 1941, characterize the law as a warlike act by which Congress deliberately authorized war.

authorization of the President to inflict a military defeat on Germany by any acts of war he deemed fitting and proper, then efforts at intelligible communication as to the purposes of the law must be regarded as vain, unless, forsooth, the explanations and promises made by President Roosevelt and Democratic defenders of the measure are to be treated as intentionally deceptive. In any event, the Constitution confers on Congress the power "to declare war," not the power to authorize the President to make war when, where, as, and if he decides to make it; hence, only by flouting a plain provision of the Constitution could Mr. Krock, Congress, President Roosevelt, or anybody else claim that the Lend-Lease Act authorized the President to wage war at his discretion and pleasure in carrying out its provisions.

Furthermore, if in truth the Lend-Lease Act of March, 1941, had authorized President Roosevelt to go to war, had emancipated him from his peace pledges of 1940, why had Mr. Krock been at such pains a few days earlier, in his column of October 28, 1941,¹⁶ to argue that when an "attack" was conceded in any clash at sea the President thereby escaped from the restraint of his public commitment to the antiwar plank of the Democratic platform of 1940? If the President had been set free and empowered to make war by the Lend-Lease Act of March 11, 1941, why did he need another liberation on October 28, 1941, seven months later? Apparently the answer to this riddle is: By November 5, 1941, Mr. Krock had come to the conclusion that President Roosevelt, by deceptive tactics in dealing with cases of "attack," had estopped himself from using such incidents as grounds for leading the country directly into war, and would henceforward have to seek in some other quarter authority for waging war on his own motion.

At all events, Mr. Krock, in his speech of November 5, charged the President with deception and with failure to take advantage of the Lend-Lease Act in pressing war on Hitler to the hilt—to the point of war under that act. But Mr. Krock

16. See above, p. 145.

failed to recognize the delicate position in which the President was placed at the moment. Amendments to the Neutrality Act of 1939 were then pending in Congress and had been for weeks; and Democratic sponsors of the amendments had denied and were denying that modifications were intended to make the country any less neutral or to commit the United States to war.²⁷ According to allegations and outward signs, the amendments to the Neutrality Act, like the Lend-Lease Act itself, were designed for the defense of the United States and not as an authorization of war.

Aware of the stout opposition in Congress to modifications of the Neutrality Act and of the fierce hostility to war expressed in the Senate and the House during the debates on the amendments, President Roosevelt was particularly constrained in November, 1941, to make his complicated moves so skillfully as to avoid even the appearance of an act of aggression. Politically and morally, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for him to have used at the time either the Lend-Lease Act or the "attacks" in the Atlantic as full warrant for waging a lawful war in that area or for calling upon Congress to declare war. Nevertheless, Mr. Krock undoubtedly expressed accurately the sentiments and reasoning of war advocates in the United States, although he played into the hands of the opposition by charging the President with flagrant deception and concealment of the truth. In so doing, he must have increased, rather than diminished, President Roosevelt's embarrassment in the conduct of affairs in the Atlantic theater during the rest of November, 1941.

27. See below, Chap. VI. Late in 1947, after this chapter was in final proof, the Navy Department released a set of captured German documents in two volumes (*Fuehrer Conferences on Matters Dealing with the German Navy 1941*). The documents show that Hitler persistently held his Navy in check for the purpose of

CHAPTER VI

No Call for "Any Declaration of

IF President Roosevelt thought that the cases of "attack" in the Atlantic during September, October, and November, justified calling upon Congress for a declaration of war against Germany, he did not say so in any public pronouncement. Nor if he had desired to make such an appeal, did he have reason for believing that Congress would hear it gladly. On the contrary, the treatment accorded in the Senate to his allegations respecting those attacks and the vehement criticisms of his methods voiced on Capitol Hill indicated sharp hostility to a full-fledged involvement of the United States in the European war.

Besides, President Roosevelt was at the time entangled in a sharp controversy that was raging, in Congress and outside, over a demand for amendments of the Neutrality Act for the purpose of making it easier to render more effective aid to the Allies in the Atlantic area. Two sections of the act, in particular, it was alleged by Americans engaged in pressing for amendments,ⁱ hampered the delivery of such aid; the first forbade the arming of American merchant ships and the second prohibited American merchant and naval vessels from entering the combat zones. In advocating amendments, the President laid emphasis on the first; for, as everybody knew, the mere arming of merchant ships would be less objectionable to opponents of war than allowing merchant and naval vessels to enter war zones where they might become immediately engaged in shooting affrays.

The President's method of handling the ticklish issue of modifying the Neutrality Act and his fear of the opposition

i. Amending the Neutrality Act was a part of the program of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, which by October, 1941, had thrown off the mask of neutrality and was definitely headed in the direction of war. Johnson, *The Battle against Isolation*, pp. 218 ff.

in Congress to war were illustrated at his press conference on September 23, reported as follows the next day by the *New York Times*:

Arming of the United States merchant ships and the supplying of arms for the vessels of other American republics is to be this government's answer to the German U-boat campaign in the North Atlantic, President Roosevelt made clear today.

No doubt was left by the President that Congress would be asked soon either to modify or repeal the Neutrality Act so that the arming of merchantmen would be possible. Congressional leaders are working upon a measure to effect this end.

Speaking out in his press conference less than twenty-four hours after the State Department had disclosed the sinking of the freighter *Pink Star* [under Panamanian registry], the Chief Executive made clear that the United States would do everything possible to protect Atlantic shipping and maintain the freedom of the seas. . . .

He said that the main issue was that the world is facing the most outrageous movement in all recorded history, an attempt by a certain group of people to conquer and hold the world. . . .

Congress, he stated emphatically, has made clear that United States policy is to help those peoples fighting the movement of conquest, and that is why America is trying to assure the transport of foodstuffs and military supplies to Great Britain. It is for protection against those who would dominate the world that American troops are in Greenland and Iceland; the dictators must be prevented from getting footholds for an attack on the New World.

A reporter asked whether it was not easier to defend ships by arming them.

The President said he thought we were heading toward the arming of United States merchant ships and those of other American nations. We are going to do everything we can to protect ships.

"Will there be just piecemeal changes in the Neutrality Act?" another reporter asked.

The reply was, that that was the problem. A decision would be made next week as to how much to ask in the way of

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would not be in violation of international law, and noted that there were many precedents for providing American cargo and passenger vessels with arms to defend themselves.

But, President Roosevelt noted, specific legislation, the Neutrality Act, now forbids the arming of nonnaval vessels. It was then that the question was asked as to whether the law would be repealed outright or amended piecemeal.

Mr. Roosevelt agreed that the Neutrality Act would have to be revised, but said that he had under consideration the question of how much he should ask in the way of repeal. In saying that a decision might be made next week he did not disclose whether this would be revealed in a message to Congress or by some other means, such as the mere introduction of a bill which subsequently would receive his endorsement. . . .

In a message to Congress on October 9, President Roosevelt urged modifications in the Neutrality Act and recommended specifically the repeal of Section 6 of the act which prohibited the arming of American flag ships engaged in foreign commerce. "The revisions which I suggest," the President said, "do not call for a declaration of war any more than the Lend- Lease Act called for a declaration of war. This is a matter of essential defense of American rights." Then the President assured Congress: "The repeal or modification of these provisions will not leave the United States *any less neutral* than we are today, but will make it possible for us *to defend the Americas* far more successfully, and to *give aid* far more effectively against the tremendous forces now marching toward conquest of the world."

While he laid stress on the matter of arming merchant ships, President Roosevelt referred in his message to provisions forbidding American ships to enter war zones: "There are other phases of the Neutrality Act to the correction of which I hope the Congress will give earnest and early attention. One of these provisions is of major importance. I believe that *it is essential to the proper defense of our country* that we cease giving the definite assistance which we are now giving to the aggressors. For, in effect, we are inviting their control of the seas *by keeping our ships out of the waters of our own friends*."

It is time for this country to stop playing into Hitler's hands, and to unshackle our own." 2

The House of Representatives acted quickly on the President's recommendation that the arming of American merchant ships be allowed; but the brief debate was marked by displays of militant hostility and the vote, hurried through under a "gag" rule, seemed to show that the opposition to this measure was stronger than it had been to the Lend-Lease Bill in March, 1941. In the Senate, there was less haste; with aid from a few Republican Senators and encouragement from the White House, sponsors of the bill, before it came to a vote, widened it in such a way as to riddle the whole Neutrality Act.³ November 7, the measure passed the Senate by a vote of fifty for and thirty-seven against; six days later the House concurred by a vote of 212 for and 194 against.⁴

As thus adopted, the measure repealed the sections of the Neutrality Act which forbade the arming of merchant ships, and authorized the President to permit or cause to be armed such ships, during the unlimited national emergency proclaimed on May 27, 1941. It also repealed the sections relative to commerce with states engaged in armed conflict and to the exclusion of American ships from combat areas.

While this revision of the Neutrality Act was pending in Congress, the arguments that had been used in 1939 by members in discussing proposed modifications of the act in the autumn of that year⁵ were repeated, with various shadings and qualifications. In October, 1941, supporters of the Administration in Congress were more hesitant in claiming that the revision was indeed likely to keep the country out of war.⁶ But

2. Funk, *Roosevelt's Foreign Policy, 1933-1941*, p. 504 ft. (Italics supplied.)

3. George H. E. Smith, *Current History*, December, 1941, pp. 303 ff.

4. Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

5. Beard, *op. cit.*, pp. 238 ff.

6. For example, during the debate in the House on October 16, 1941, Representative Carl Curtis, Republican from Nebraska, asked Representative Pete Jarman, Democrat of Alabama, member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, whether Administration supporters in promoting the bill of repeal had as their objective "the keeping of this country out of war." On this subject the following colloquy took place:

"Mr. Curtis: The gentleman is a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs,

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the old contentions of 1939 were reiterated in October and November, 1941: on the one side, the bill to amend the Neutrality Act is not a war measure but is designed to provide for national defense; and on the other side, the bill means war for the United States.

The following extracts from the debates in the House and the Senate illustrate the manner in which supporters of the bill for amending the Neutrality Act, in one form or another,⁷ represented that action as designed to keep the country out of war:

Representative Walter A. Lynch, Democrat of New York:

No one in this House is more opposed to war than I. It is because

I am opposed to war that I have voted for every bill that would give us an adequate army for defense and a navy strong enough to defeat any combination of navies in the world. . . .

It is because I want to keep war from our land that I shall vote to arm American merchantmen. If an armed American merchant man, on the high seas, sinks a German submarine or surface raider in self-defense, war is not inevitable. If German submarines or surface raiders continue to sink unarmed American ships, war, in my opinion, is inevitable. . . .

Let me say we all want peace, but we can never have peace if unarmed American merchantmen are sunk, their crews drowned or left adrift on the ocean. War may not come if we permit American seamen to defend themselves. War will surely come, as

three years that I have been in this body, I have noticed that all of the measures that have been brought in by the committee have had as their objective the keeping of this country out of war. It has been so stated when these measures were presented to the floor. I ask the gentleman if that is still the objective in this legislation, or has the committee abandoned that objective?

“Mr. Jarmann: We absolutely have not abandoned that objective, but, as I have tried to show, the United States has recently set out on a program of all-out national defense, wherever we may best accomplish that in the opinion of the Congress.

“Mr. Curtis: Then it is not necessarily offered as an effort to keep us out of war?”

“Mr. Jarmann: I would not say absolutely; no. The main purpose is to get those goods over there to defeat Hitler.”

House Debate, *Congressional Record*, 77th Congress, First Session. Vol. 87, Part 7, October 16, 1941, p. 7964.

7. No attempt is made here to show the distinctions drawn in the debates between arming American merchant ships and allowing American merchant and naval

it came before, when unarmed American ships were sunk with out warning.⁸

Representative Martin F. Smith, Democrat of Washington:

Mr. Chairman, I am supporting and voting for the passage of House Joint Resolution 237 to repeal section 6 of the Neutrality Act of 1939, relating to the arming of American vessels. . . .

Unless our shipments of munitions and supplies reach their destination and are safely delivered to Britain and the democracies our aid will prove wholly ineffective. Obviously there would be no object gained in our manufacturing, producing, and shipping these articles and then have them sunk to the bottom of the ocean. This is only common sense. We are committed, in obedience to overwhelming public opinion, to a policy of national defense by furnishing aid to Britain and the democracies in order to thereby keep war away from the United States. We have fully embarked upon this policy and there can be no turning back now. . . .

We should continue to render every possible aid to Britain and the democracies by furnishing them with material and supplies, but not manpower. I am opposed to sending our boys to fight and die in the Red Sea, Greenland, Iceland, or any other foreign world outpost far distant—thousands of miles away—from our country.®

Representative James W. Mott, Republican of Oregon:

I said in the beginning that all are agreed that it is not only our right under international law but our duty in the interest of our own security to maintain and defend our natural right to use the seas, and to do that with every means we possess. This proposition seems to me to be fundamental; otherwise we would not be a free nation, free to enjoy our sovereign rights as a nation. We propose now to implement this right by the means of arming our merchant vessels for their own protection. This in itself, in my opinion, will not and cannot lead us into war. If I thought it would I certainly would not

war, it will help to keep the war away from us, and that, I am sure, is what all of us desire.¹⁰

Representative W. O. Burgin, Democrat of North Carolina:

Step by step they say we are getting into war, but there is no evidence of it. We are still not in war. I have heard it said that 85 per cent of the American people are opposed to war. I am convinced that 100 per cent of the American people are opposed to war. I do not believe that there is a single Member of this House who thinks that the American people want to go to war or that this Congress wants to go to war. We all abhor war. . . .

We are considering today not a war resolution at all. I am not a Solomon and I am not attempting to advise any of you but may I say that this is simply a resolution affecting our domestic policy. . . .

We have heard considerable argument here on the subject of war. This resolution is not a declaration of war; it only provides for the arming of our merchant ships in order that they may be protected against the pirates of the sea. The adoption of this resolution and the arming of our merchant ships may not be 100 per cent protection but I cannot see for the life of me why arming our ships would involve us in war.¹¹

Representative Luther Patrick, Democrat of Alabama:

Now it seems to me that if Germany should sink a merchant vessel that is unarmed, it will certainly be a greater aggravation and have a greater tendency to provoke us into war than if she were to tackle an armed merchant vessel, no matter what it does. Whatever justification there may be for the position of gentlemen on other things, I cannot see how they can logically say that this is a step to war, because all on earth this is trying to do is arm merchant vessels. No other proposition is involved at all.¹²

Representative Homer D. Angell, Republican of Oregon:

While I believe that we should use every means at our

seas, to uphold the Monroe Doctrine, and to protect our Western Hemisphere, I also hold the belief that we should not send our American troops overseas beyond the Americas to engage in this or any foreign war unless we are attacked. I do not believe, however, that the arming of our merchant ships—a right granted by international law and a right that we have always adhered to except when voluntarily surrendered—in any way imperils our peace and our security. It certainly does not join us as a belligerent in the war.¹³

Senator Tom Connally, Democrat of Texas:

So, Mr. President, I have concluded that it is our solemn duty to the American people to repeal sections 2, 3 and 6 and to revert to our rights under international law. We would simply reassume the status of other nations under international law.

Why are we doing these things? Why are we providing a two-ocean navy which, I hope, will be capable of controlling both the Pacific and the Atlantic? It is not for aggression. It is not because we covet an inch of the territory of any of our neighbors. It is because we propose to see that the interests of the United States, our territory, the lives of our people, and our institutions shall have security behind this wall of steel which the Navy will provide.

Mr. President, we want no war. I know there are those who charge those of us who want to repeal these provisions as wanting war. We have no desire to engage in the World War. We propose, however, to adopt every device and every measure which we can adopt to keep that war from coming to our own shores.¹⁴

Senator Claude Pepper, Democrat of Florida:

I agree that the issue involved is no less solemn than peace or war for this Nation; but I do not agree that the opponents of this proposal are the friends of peace. On the contrary, time will tell that those who are the advocates of this measure are

13. *Ibid.*, p. 8016.

14. *Ibid.*, Part 8, p. 8250.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 8284.

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13. *Ibid.*, p. 8016.

14. *Ibid.*, Part 8, p. 8250.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 8284.

Senator Joseph O'Mahoney, Democrat of Wyoming:

This measure before us is not a measure to go to war. It is a measure to take away from our Government the shackles which were placed upon it in a law that was passed before the incredible Hitler plan of conquest had revealed itself to the world.¹⁶

Senator Theodore Green, Democrat of Rhode Island:

Mr. President, the people of this country do not want to go to war, and neither does the Congress, and neither do those who are in favor of amending the Neutrality Act. The question is not, how ever, Shall we go to war? The question is rather whether the war will come to us. In other words, if we do not want war here in America, we must make every effort to keep it away from here. There had been a good deal of talk here about keeping out of war. Almost all of us want to keep out of war; yet here on the floor of the Senate, as well as elsewhere, anyone who disagrees with a proposal for keeping out of war accuses the proposer of try ing to get us into war. There is no more reason for the so-called isolationists making this accusation against those who make such a proposal than there is for their opponents making the same ac cusation. In fact there is less reason, because in the present state of the World War we shall run a greater risk by doing nothing than by doing something to avert it.

The most effective means of keeping war away from America is to prevent Germany from completing her list of conquered Euro pean countries; and this can best be done by rendering aid to the countries that are fighting Germany on the other side of the At lantic Ocean. So, we should give all material aid to any nation fighting Germany and her allies. That means not only producing war materials for them but also making certain that the materials reach them. It is no help to them and a loss to us if, after producing by the sweat of our brow these war materials, they are sunk in the Atlantic Ocean.¹⁷

Senator Chan Gurney, Republican of South Dakota:

I am convinced that the Neutrality Act of 1939 should be re pealed in its entirety. This should be done now and without further delay. . . .

Complete repeal is the only honest stand we can take. Partial repeal is an obvious subterfuge, designed to placate those who have closed their eyes to the handwriting on the wall. It is designed to deceive our people into believing that a Neutrality Act still remains on our statute books, whereas in actual fact its remains might as well have been buried with the rest. . . .

... I am convinced that the Neutrality Act has not only prolonged and expanded the war but was largely responsible for starting it. Hitler was assured that we would not deliver the goods, and he knew he could prevent our friends from getting them. I am sure the act did not then, and does not now, express the under lying interests and convictions of the American people.¹⁸

The following extracts indicate the nature of the arguments against the proposed modification of the Neutrality Act as authorizing more steps on the road to war:

Representative George Holden Tinkham, Republican of Massachusetts:

With the declared policy of carrying contraband to belligerent governments, United States merchantmen under international law can be sunk as war vessels. Thus, if this bill is passed, it means the wholesale sinking of our merchant marine and the unlimited killing of our seamen and citizens. If our ships should go into belligerent ports, as suggested by the President, there would be more inflammatory incidents and the shedding of more blood. This would mean war, of course, and apparently this is what President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull desire. On the plea that constitutes a fantastic extension of the doctrine of the freedom of the seas under which they are proceeding to send contraband of war through combat waters to a belligerent, they have already declared naval warfare without seeking the consent of Congress, contrary to all historical precedent and to the constitutional provisions in relation to war.¹⁹

Representative Daniel Reed, Republican of New York:

I ask: How can any Member who desires to keep this country out

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is now proposed, when he knows that such repeal will invite at tack?

Armed merchant ships were sunk in wholesale lots in World War No. i. The record shows that guns on merchant ships were no defense but only served to invite attack without warning. This proposal here today will do nothing more than to send out upon the high seas a suicide fleet to create an incident to plunge our country into war!²⁰

Representative Harold Knutson, Republican of Minnesota:

My countrymen, do not deceive yourselves or attempt to deceive those whom you represent by asserting that the passage of this legislation is calculated to preserve the peace of our country. No one in his right mind will contend that, and those of you who vote for this resolution will not be able to convince those whom you represent that you are today voting for another measure that is designed to keep America out of the war. This is another, and perhaps the last, step to war. Mark the prediction.²¹

Representative John M. Coffee, Democrat of Washington:

Mr. Chairman, I am opposed to this measure which would permit the arming of our merchant vessels. This is admittedly only a prelude to sending armed merchantmen into the combat zones. If we repeal section 6 of the Neutrality Act, which this bill pro poses to do, we will be taking one of the last steps that will plunge this Nation into the war. It may be the last opportunity that the Congress will have to register its opposition against becoming actually engaged in war.

More than 80 per cent of our people are opposed to war, and I am confident the majority of the Members of this Congress are opposed to involving this Nation in the war. How inconsistent it is for Congress to oppose war and yet approve all of these steps that lead inevitably to war.²²

Representative John M. Robsion, Republican of Kentucky:

We would have been in the war long ago but for the determined opposition of 80 per cent or more of the American people and

majority of Congress. This bill and others are mere subterfuges of the Administration to have the Congress give the President a green light for war. We should not sit supinely by and permit the President and his Cabinet to carry on these undeclared wars.²³

Representative George W. Gillie, Republican of Indiana:

The issue as I see it is simple and clear-cut. It is war or peace. For who is to doubt that if we arm our merchant ships, load them with munitions, and send them into the Atlantic war zones, we will not be in the war before the start of another year?

The administration is seeking the destruction of this last safe guard for peace in typical piecemeal fashion. Today we are asked to repeal section 6 of the Neutrality Act and permit the arming of American merchant vessels. If we do this in a few days we will be requested to repeal section 2 of the act and permit our armed ships to enter the European war zones [which was done].

The only reason repeal of section 2 is not sought at this time is the fear on the part of the war party that the American people have not been fully conditioned to take the final, shooting step. Mr. Chairman, this is a typical administration trick. If the people will not take their medicine in one big gulp, give it to them in little sugar-coated doses. It all adds up to the same thing—active participation in a shooting war. . . .

Let us serve notice to the world by our vote on this amendment that the Yanks are not coming, that our sailors are not going to be sent to die in European waters, and that 80 per cent of the American people are still firm in their resolve not to become involved in a shooting war on foreign soil.²⁴

Representative H. Carl Anderson, Republican of Minnesota:

Mr. Chairman, this legislation is, in my opinion, another step toward war and a definite advancement on the road to another A.E.F.

Any member of this House who is sincere in his pledge to his people back home that he would never vote to send American boys again into foreign wars cannot do other than to

Senator Arthur Vandenberg, Republican of Michigan:

Mr. President, I consider the pending Senate decision as substantially settling the question whether America deliberately and consciously shall go all the way into a shooting war, probably upon two oceans. The ultimate acknowledgment by Congress of a state of war, I fear, will be a mere formality, ratifying a precipitated fact if we approve the needless provocation and trend inherent in this proposed action. Therefore I consider that I am now facing the controlling issue so far as our own acts are concerned in respect to our entry into World War No. 2. It is in the presence of that grim and sinister specter, including a second A.E.F., without which the highest British command frankly says there cannot be an anti-Axis military victory on the continent of Europe, that I take my stand against the pending resolution.²⁶

Senator Robert A. Taft, Republican of Ohio:

Mr. President, the adoption of the joint resolution now before the Senate would be direct authority from the Congress to the President to carry on an undeclared war against Germany, Italy and Japan on all the oceans of the world and in all the ports into which seagoing ships may sail. If the Members of the Senate intend to keep their pledges to the people of the United States, pledges made by themselves, by their leaders and by their parties, they can only vote "No" on the impending measure. . . .

It seems common sense to say that in the interest of all of us, Americans shall keep away from battlefields far from our own land. But more than anything else, the actual experience of the World War, the inevitable result of shipping contraband to a belligerent nation through such a zone, is conclusive proof of what will happen if we repeal this law.²⁷

Senator Gerald Nye, Republican of North Dakota:

The resolution provides for the arming of American merchant ships, and removes any and all restrictions upon the movement of American ships. A surer way to get into war is not known than that of going out and looking and asking for war. That way invites incidents—not lone incidents but incidents by wholesale.

. . . .

Getting rid of whatever is left of fortification against American involvement is the continuing purpose embodied in the pending proposal. We are told that the laws of neutrality have proven a failure. Yes, Mr. President, they have proven a failure, a miserable failure, from the standpoint of such people as may have hoped that the United States would become involved in Europe's war in spite of the existence of such laws. But the laws of neutrality have been a huge success from the standpoint of the purpose which caused their enactment. They were intended to afford America a fortification against easy involvement in another foreign war, and so long as we have permitted those laws to function they have served their purpose exactly 100 per cent. But if we now repeal what we are asked to repeal by the pending proposal, we can put it down as pretty certain that we will be involved in the European war. . . .²⁸ The pending question is this and bluntly this and no less than

this:

Shall America, deliberately and consciously, go all the way into a shooting war, perhaps upon two oceans, or shall it not?

That question has no trimmings and no qualifying phrases to go along with it. It is *a* question of war or no war, war with its inevitable A.E.F. and its inevitable slaughter, or no war with an America pursuing the independent destiny which it can so readily achieve, beholden to no one, afraid of nothing.

The high command of Britain has made it plain that without an American A.E.F. there is no possibility of reentering the continent of Europe and forcing Hitler back into Berlin. How can any one possibly doubt, at this point, that the first American ship manned by an American crew, under an American flag, loaded with American munitions designed for Britain and running a German submarine blockade, is simply the advance guard of an American transport loaded with troops for overseas duty and return voyages with our dead and wounded? ²⁹

Senator Robert M. LaFollette, Progressive of Wisconsin:

Mr. President, it is my contention that if we adopt the joint resolution which proposes the repeal of the three most vital sections of the Neutrality Act we shall have removed the last

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which stands between the people of this country and actual involvement in war.

Therefore, I think that when Senators vote upon this issue they will be voting upon the issue of peace or war. I am convinced that if we repeal these essential sections of the Neutrality Act, if we send our merchantmen armed and in convoys through belligerent waters and have them discharge actual contraband of war in belligerent ports, our ships will be sunk and lives will be lost. In my opinion, this will be the final softening up process in an effort to bring a reluctant people to a willingness to accept actual hostilities.³⁰

Senator C. Wayland Brooks, Republican of Illinois:

Each step that we have taken thus far has been taken with the insistent announcement that it was to keep us out of war. I say to you this is the last step. You cannot shoot your way a little bit into war any more than you can go a little bit over Niagara Falls. Indeed, if we repeal the provisions prohibiting the arming of our merchant ships, and if we repeal the prohibition against their carrying contraband of war and sailing into belligerent ports of warring countries it is, in effect, a proclamation that "Here we come with war material in American ships, under the American flag, manned by American gun crews, shooting our way through as participants in the war."

I do not question the patriotic motives of men who sincerely desire to do that very thing; but I protest doing it while telling the American people, "We are doing it to avoid war."

I said before, the President has been at war; the Cabinet has been at war; but Congress has not been at war. In every action, Congress has definitely stated that it was not a war move, and that no act of war must be committed. Now, if this joint resolution passes, and we arm our ships and send them out to shoot under an act of Congress, by that action Congress goes overboard and is at war.

When the administration, the Cabinet, and the Congress are all at war, the country is at war; America is at war. Consequently I am opposed to the passage of this joint

Senator D. Worth Clark, Democrat of Idaho:

There are in this body Senators who still insist that the step we are now called on to take will not mean war. But I do not very well see how any man can fail to perceive that even though this step may not mean war, this is the last spot at which we can stop short of war. We have been carried along swiftly and mercilessly by the fatal logic of our own actions. At each step it has become more difficult to resist that logic. If we take this one further step the power to resist war will be gone. We will be utterly at the mercy of two men—one of them Adolf Hitler, the other Frank lin D. Roosevelt. Either one can put us into the war at any instant he may choose, if this measure is passed; the power of decision will have passed out of the hands of the American people and out of the hands of the Congress.³²³³

Senator David Walsh, Democrat of Massachusetts:

I submit that although the resolution upon which we are soon to vote contains no words of war or words of peace, it is nevertheless the issue of war and peace, and history will rate this action by the Congress as tantamount to our concurrence in a shooting war which the President on his own authority has proclaimed.

We are being asked to proceed by indirection and by subter fuge to take our country into the war in Europe. The Neutrality Act, which was described as a law "to keep us out of war" is now being scrapped. The consequence is to serve notice upon the American people that Congress has removed all barriers to our actual participation in the war.⁸³

Senator Burton K. Wheeler, Democrat of Montana:

Mr. President, the passage of the joint resolution now pending would give congressional approval to convoys; it would give congressional approval to naval warfare; it would give congressional approval to delivery of contraband of war to a belligerent, and it would place the stamp of congressional approval upon the orders given American destroyers to chase and destroy German U-boats on the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Arctic Ocean or

wherever the swashbuckling, irresponsible, and erratic Secretary of the Navy may send them, even at the cost of life itself.

Make no mistake about it, Mr. President, the passage of the pending joint resolution would be more than permission to arm merchantmen; it would be more than permission to send American merchant ships into war zones; it would be the approval of the evasion and violation of statutes by the executive and administrative branch of the Government; it would be tantamount to a declaration of war; and would be hailed as a mandate for more and further war steps, and the next step would be to send an expeditionary force. I have charged, and I repeat the charge, that the enactment of such legislation means war. Believing that, I shall oppose it; I shall fight it; I shall vote against it. . . .

Mr. President, we know it is war. We know that the passage of the pending measure means war. No Member of Congress can go back to his constituents and say that he did not mean it, because editorials from one end of the country to the other have said it, and will continue to say it. Any Senator who votes for the pending measure is voting for war; and it will do no good for him to try to deceive his people into thinking that he is not doing so, because he will not succeed. He will not fool them as they have been fooled with respect to other laws. When any Member of Congress thinks he is deceiving the people, he is only "kidding" himself.³⁴

When President Roosevelt signed, on November 17, 1941, the Joint Resolution amending the Neutrality Act, the intellectual and moral appearances of things presented many anomalies. For months the Administration had been proceeding under the theory that supplying munitions to the belligerents at war with the Axis Powers, using American war vessels to convoy ships carrying munitions to those belligerents, and shooting at German submarines during attacks on convoys were not acts of war. All these acts, it was maintained by the Administration, were measures of self-defense.

Nevertheless during the same months, the President and his high officials had also been proclaiming again and again formulas that indicated the possibility of American

ment through an attack: War is coming nearer and nearer. The American people must wake up to this fact. Hitler is bent on nothing less than the conquest of the Western Hemisphere and the rest of the world. There is an unbridgeable gulf between the brutal despotism of the Nazi regime and the democratic system of the United States. By the enactment of the Lend-Lease Act in March, 1941, Congress has bound the country to the defeat of the Axis Powers and the President is rightfully taking the "defensive" actions necessary to assure the victory of the Allies.

In reply to these formulas from Administration quarters, opponents of President Roosevelt's measures employed other formulas.³⁵ The supplying of munitions to belligerents, using the American Navy to convoy ships to belligerents, and shooting at German submarines, are acts of war, in purpose and in reality. They will and are intended to carry the United States into full and open war. It is hypocrisy to maintain otherwise. It is flagrant deception to tell the American people that they can keep out of war and avoid sending their boys to fight outside of the Americas, while committing these acts of hostility with increasing abandon. It is mockery to assert that this "shooting war" is waged only for the defense of the United States, to keep war away from American shores. It is chicanery to pretend that the United States is neutral and that retaliations of German ships of war against American naval vessels are unprovoked and unwarranted "attacks" on the United States. It is a fraud of deepest dye to insist that the aggressive measures taken under color of the Lend-Lease Act are not "warlike acts"—are merely acts in defense of the United States. It is make-believe to protest that the Administration does not in fact want to engage the United States in the war, is not deliberately maneuvering the country into war. Such was the position taken by opponents of President Roosevelt's conduct of foreign affairs during the months preceding Pearl

And how did President Roosevelt and high officials in his Administration characterize their opponents? In his message of January 6, the President warned the country against appeasers and selfish men: "We must always be wary of those who with sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal preach the 'ism' of appeasement. We must especially beware of that small group of selfish men who would clip the wings of the American eagle in order to feather their own nests." Some of his critics the President treated as well-meaning, but as suffering from illusions, and in fact aligned, if not in purpose, on the side of "appeasers" and "dupes." He bore down heavily on others as willing tools of Hitler, ready to profit by "doing business" with him, at the expense of servitude for the American people. Many pointed questions regarding his intentions and activities, the President dismissed with jocular gestures.

An excellent example of the President's manner of characterizing the opposition is provided by the following extract from his address before the Governing Board of the Pan-American Union at the White House, on May 27, 1941: 36

There is, of course, a small group of sincere, patriotic men and women whose real passion for peace has shut their eyes to the ugly realities of international banditry and to the need to resist it at all costs. I am sure they are embarrassed by the sinister support they are receiving from the enemies of democracy in our midst—the Bundists, and Fascists, and Communists,³⁷ and every group devoted to bigotry and racial and religious intolerance. It is no mere coincidence that all the arguments put forward by these enemies of democracy—all their attempts to confuse and divide our people and to destroy public confidence in our Government—all their defeatist forebodings that Britain and democracy are already beaten—all their selfish promises that we can "do business" with Hitler—all of these are but echoes of the words that have been poured out from the Axis bureaus of propaganda. Those same words have been used before in other countries—to scare

36. Funk *op. cit.* p. 401

them, to divide them, to soften them up. Invariably, those same words have formed the advance guard of physical attack.

With the lines of the verbal contest between the President and his critics so fixed and emphasized, the month of November, 1941, drew to a close. Despite contentions of war advocates that shootings in the Atlantic constituted the "attacks" which released the President from the antiwar platform of the Democratic party and warranted his calling upon Congress for a declaration of war against Germany, he made no such appeal to the national legislature. If, indeed, he had contemplated a direct request for war power on this ground, the design had been exploded before the country; for the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs and the newspapers had publicly exposed his misrepresentations of the alleged attacks.⁸⁸ As a matter of fact, the President's management of this series of complicated moves in the Atlantic had been repeatedly denounced by his opponents as plain evidence of the duplicity against which they had long been inveighing, and had been criticized even by some of his ardent supporters eager for war. The large vote in both houses of Congress against the resolution riddling the Neutrality Act, as well as the speeches for and against it, clearly indicated that a call from the President for a declaration of war at anytime near the middle of November would precipitate a prolonged conflict in the House and the Senate and that, even if the appeal was successful, it would fail to achieve national solidarity—to silence the large antiwar party. Nobody in the country knew this better than President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull.³⁹

With the prospects for an all-out war in the Atlantic beclouded by crimination and recrimination, the President and the Secretary now gave special attention to the

CHAPTER VII

Appearances of Relations with Japan

IN many substantial respects the relations of the United States with Japan differed from those with Germany and Italy in 1941. Japan was, no doubt, regarded as an ally of Hitler and Mussolini. Indeed, since September 27, 1940, Japan had been united with Germany and Italy in a treaty which bound the three powers, among other things, to aid one another if any one of them was attacked by any power not then involved in the European war—obviously the United States. Furthermore, the Japanese Government, since 1931, had been flouting the American doctrine of the Open Door for China and had been guilty of aggressions and depredations in that country; and after the fall of France in the summer of 1940 the Japanese Government had extended its imperialist operations to French Indo-China. All this time, American sympathy in general had been on the side of China.

Nevertheless, while the diplomatic relations of the United States with Germany and Italy had become merely nominal, those with Japan had been actively maintained. At the opening of 1941, therefore, some kind of adjustment with the Japanese Government appeared to be probable as well as possible. Moreover, American attitudes to Japan were not such as to preclude such an adjustment. Most Americans had little definite knowledge of Far Eastern affairs. Nor were they, being mainly European in origin, so extensively and deeply enlisted by sympathies or bitterness in the fortunes of Japan, China, and other Far Eastern countries as in the fortunes of Great Britain, France, Germany, and other European nations. Hence the involvement of the United States in a war with Japan was not as passionately desired by any large group of Americans as involvement in war with Germany and Italy was so vigorously opposed by other

war, Hitler, not Hirohito, was “the” enemy, and to many of them avoidance of war with Japan was highly desirable, since it would permit the concentration of American energies on the defeat of Hitler and his European allies. In short, it was war against Germany, not Japan, that formed the main objective of the American war advocates. This was undoubtedly true even though some American imperialists, who had long had their eyes on the Far East, and some Christian missionaries to China were then desirous of having the United States “settle old scores with Japan” by arms.

Numerous Americans labored under the impression that Japan could be brought to her knees by an economic boycott in one form or another, without war, and favored that kind of “strong policy” or “firm hand” with Japan; but by no means all who advocated a boycott wanted to push that policy to the point of a two-front war, with the Japanese on the one side and the Germans and Italians on the other. Besides, high officers in the American Army and Navy, who would have to fight the two-front war if it came, urged cautious dealings with Japan in efforts to postpone, at least, an armed conflict in the Pacific.¹ Accordingly, American interests engaged in promoting war against Japan were less powerful than those aligned for the drive in the Atlantic.

Whatever the peculiarities of the situation with regard to Far Eastern affairs, the peace pledges of the Democratic platform and of President Roosevelt applied to the Orient as well as to Europe. The party’s antiwar plank forbade the sending of American armed forces to fight outside the Americas, “except in case of attack,” and hence pertained to the Far East no less than to Europe. And it was in reply to Republican charges that President Roosevelt was maneuvering in the direction of a war with Japan that he had declared, on November 2, 1940, “this country is not going to war.”

Undoubtedly, many times during the year 1941 President Roosevelt, Secretary Hull, Undersecretary Welles

World War was going on, that America was in danger, that the Axis Powers planned to subjugate the United States, and that extraordinary measures for defense were necessary. And in the midsummer, the President began to apply drastic sanctions to Japan. But such words and actions did not imply that the peace promises of the Administration in respect of Japan were thereby explicitly or automatically canceled.

As a matter of fact, the application of economic sanctions to Japan, including the freezing of Japanese assets in the United States on July 25, 1941, was widely if not generally viewed in the United States, particularly by many professional advocates of peace, as pacific in purpose and probable consequences. This was one of the outstanding ideas in the armory of propagandists who held that the foreign policy of the country should be dedicated to the prevention of war everywhere, in Asia as well as in Europe.² It was an idea which Henry L. Stimson, as Secretary of State, had sought to "implement" in 1931 and 1932 in his efforts to checkmate Japan in Manchuria, only to be checkmated himself by President Hoover, who informed his entire Cabinet that economic and military sanctions "are the roads to war."³ Doubtless, Mr. Stimson, as Secretary of War in 1941, still clung to his "doctrine" of 1931, although he had been informed by his former chief, President Hoover, that it was a way to war. Yet in his Executive Order of July 25, President Roosevelt merely declared that it was "designed among other things to prevent the use of the financial facilities of the United States and trade between Japan and the United States, in ways harmful to national defense and American interest, to prevent the liquidation in the United States of assets obtained by duress and conquest, and to curb subversive activities in the United States."⁴ Such at least was President Roosevelt's intention as disclosed to the public on July 25, 1941.[®]

Nor at any time during the months preceding
December

7, 1941, did President Roosevelt announce to the public that negotiations with Japan were in a hopeless deadlock, that an appeal to Congress for authority to employ war power was contemplated by his Administration, or that diplomatic relations with Japan were so disrupted as to indicate a necessary imminence of war. Even as late as December 2, 1941, the President stated at a press conference that "the United States is at peace with Japan and perfectly friendly, too." 6

Nevertheless, it was generally known that relations with Japan had reached a point of strain in July, 1941. Thereafter, judging by official statements in various forms, including those at press conferences, the conversations or negotiations with Japan which were highly critical in nature fell into three stages, each marked by special features though not sharply divided: from July 24 to the Atlantic Conference; from the Atlantic Conference to the end of October; and after November 1.

FROM JULY 24, 1941, TO THE ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

During the first six months of 1941, according to official statements, relations with Japan, while far from promising,

on the application of embargoes to Japan. On July 22, 1941, Admiral Stark wrote to Mr. Welles in the State Department that he had prepared a memorandum for the President, that the President was pleased with it, and that the President had proposed sending a copy to Mr. Hull. In this memorandum prepared by Admiral Turner and initialed by Admiral Stark, the President's naval advisers informed him: (1) the effect of an embargo would be to hamper Japanese war effort, though not immediately, and not decisively; (2) "an embargo would probably result in a fairly early attack by Japan on Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies. . . . If war in the Pacific is to be accepted by the United States, actions leading up to it should, if practicable, be postponed until Japan is engaged in a war in Siberia"; (3) an embargo on exports "is almost certain to intensify the determination of those now in power [in Japan] to continue their present course. Furthermore, it seems certain that, if Japan should then take military measures against the British and Dutch, she would also include military action against the Philippines, which would immediately involve us in a Pacific war." CJC, Part 5, pp. 2379-2384. Admiral Stark testified before the Navy Court in 1944, in respect of an oil embargo, that, after the imposition of economic sanctions upon Japan, she would go somewhere and take oil and that if he were a Japanese he would do it himself. *Ibid.*, p. 2379 f. In short, when President Roosevelt began his program of economic sanctions in the midsummer of 1941, he had been advised by his naval experts that such actions should be postponed and that, if taken, they would almost certainly inflame the war party in Japan and probably result in a fairly early attack by Japan in the

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were conducted by President Roosevelt with a view to preventing war in the Pacific. Such was the impression given by the President in a speech on July 24 to members of the Volunteer Participation Committee then engaged in organizing civilian defense. Taken in their context his remarks on that occasion seemed to be directed to American citizens who were discontented because the President had not been drastic enough in imposing economic embargoes on Japan, often under the impression that such measures would bring Japan to book without incurring the risk of shedding American blood in the process. But the President's words on that occasion could be interpreted as evidence that he had been trying to prevent war in the Pacific.

Near the close of his address on July 24, the President said:

There is a World War going on, and has been for some time—nearly two years. One of our efforts, from the very beginning, was to prevent the spread of that World War in certain areas where it hadn't started. One of those areas is a place called the Pacific Ocean—one of the largest areas of the earth. . . . It was very essential from our own selfish point of view of defense to prevent a war from starting in the South Pacific. So our foreign policy was—trying to stop a war from breaking out down there. . . . It was essential for Great Britain that we try to keep the peace down there in the South Pacific.

All right. And now here is a nation called Japan. . . . If we had cut the oil off, they probably would have gone down to the Dutch East Indies a year ago, and you would have had war.

Therefore, there was—you might call it—a method in letting this oil go to Japan, with the hope—and it has worked for two years—of keeping war out of the South Pacific for our own good, for the good of the defense of Great Britain, and the freedom of the seas. . . .

Although President Roosevelt did not say explicitly on July 24 that he had quit trying to prevent war in the Pacific, his use of the past tense in his speech of that day

watch for a shift in his policy, raised the issue at a press conference on the next day, July 25. Thereupon the President, in an evasive manner, merely hinted at growing dangers in “the world situation,” and left the journalists and the public guessing about his designs and maneuvers—as the following report of the conference in the *New York Times* shows:

The conference opened with a question whether the President's use of the past tense yesterday in describing the policy of appeasement toward Japan indicated that the period of appeasement was over. The President replied that he was only pointing out what had happened up to the time he spoke.

The question was repeated with the assertion that his language strongly suggested his discussion of that policy was a sort of swan song, but he insisted that he had said nothing about that and would say nothing about it.

A questioner wanted to know what the Japanese situation meant to our neutrality, because that was the question uppermost in the minds of many citizens. That, the President said, was a terribly iffy question.

The interrogator repeated that it was a valid question, to which every American wanted the answer. The President replied that so many things haven't happened. Then he was asked, “So many horrible things are looming?”

The President replied that he knew, but he could not talk about things that have not happened yet. If there was some one definite line we could bank on as going to happen, then perhaps we could talk about it. But that's not the situation, he added.

The President declined to answer a question whether the repeated use of the word “duress” in the strong Japanese statement made yesterday by Mr. Welles did not provide a legal policy backing for freezing of Japanese credits in this country. Mr. Roosevelt said he had not heard reports that there were only four Japanese ships left in American harbors. He declined again to state whether his remarks to the committee yesterday indicated an end or a continuance of the appeasement policy.

The President was asked whether he thought the American

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It was disclosed that yesterday he received reports from persons who have been around the country—a newspaper man, two magazine writers, a Cabinet officer and two others, all of whom had been across the continent in March or April and again more recently.

All came the same day and all of them agreed, the President said, that there had been a tremendous change since March or April, that the people are far more cognizant of international danger and of the world situation, and increasingly so. Mr. Roosevelt added that he didn't think they were sufficiently aware yet, but there had been a very marked change in three months.

Asked what could be done to sharpen their awareness, the President cited one example out of a dozen, the Volunteer Participation Committee which called at the White House yesterday. He had told its members, he said, of the need for this awareness, and with five members from each corps area, and hundreds of committees under them, he was hopeful that they would reach every home with the message of the situation's urgency.

Would you say, he was asked, that events in the Far East had sharply accentuated the dangers of the international situation? The President replied that he would put it this way: that events in the Far East were bringing greater awareness on the part of the public to the dangers of the world situation.⁸

Journalists and newspaper readers left guessing as a result of the press conference on July 25 received very soon some concrete information on the state of affairs with Japan. By an Executive order, that day, President Roosevelt froze Japanese assets in the United States and brought trade between the two countries to a halt. That action was, of course, open to various interpretations. It could mean an effort to keep peace or prevent war in the Pacific by the use of economic pressure, with the expectation that Japan would yield rather than fight. Or it could be taken as implying that President Roosevelt was traveling the Stimson road 9—to war, if sanctions failed. But as to his intentions or hopes in this respect, the President also left the public wondering

Under date lines August 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, dispatches in the *New York Times* from Tokyo, Saigon, Chungking, Shanghai, Manila, Washington, and London indicated that the situation in the Far East was growing more strained, that Great Britain and the United States were closely cooperating in the Pacific, that no more crude oil was to be exported to Japan, and that the Japanese Government was complaining against what it called "encirclement."

At a press conference on August 8, the matter of encirclement and British-American joint action in the Far East was presented to Secretary Hull. The Secretary's treatment of the subject was reported by the *New York Times* as follows:

If Japan imagines she finds herself dangerously encircled she has accomplished that encirclement herself, Secretary of State Cordell Hull said today at his press conference.

His comment was prompted by dispatches from Tokyo declaring that the Japanese Government felt that the United States, Britain, China and the Netherlands Indies were "encircling" Japan militarily, politically and economically.

Mr. Hull said he knew nothing about this supposed encirclement proposition. If any country thinks it is about to be encircled, he added, it can find lawful areas where it can go and avoid giving the suggestion by itself that it is about to be encircled.

State Department officials said this evening that they had no comment to make at this time concerning London reports that discussions were actually under way between this country and Britain concerning a joint stern warning to Japan designed to curb her policy of expansion in the Far East 10

THE ATLANTIC CONFERENCE AND AFTER

When President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill held their meetings in the Atlantic in August, American citizens, except those who, as the President said on July 24, had not read the newspapers or listened to the radio "carefully," knew that affairs in the Pacific were approaching a point of high pressure. Official statements to the press in Washington, veiled

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and vague though they were, had left no doubt of that. Accordingly, expectations of reporters were keyed up when the President returned home from his voyage to sea. Had any thing been decided at the conference with regard to Japan? The President at his press conference on August 16 spoke only in general terms. The *New York Times* reported him as saying that he and the Prime Minister had "discussed the situation on every continent. Every continent you ever heard of, he had added facetiously." Since Asia had been "heard of," evidently the Far East had been considered at the Atlantic Conference but the President's nebulous statement threw no light on the commitments he had made, if any, with reference to the Far East. On August 18, however, in his report to congressional leaders, he declared that the chief danger of early involvement in a "shooting war," as he saw it, lay in the situation in the Far East, where, he intimated, chances were about even that Japan would start new aggressions.¹¹

Although at his press conference immediately after the Atlantic meetings with Mr. Churchill, President Roosevelt said that they had discussed "every continent you ever heard of," he gave no indication to the public at the time that Japan had been one of the chief items on the agenda for discussion with the Prime Minister. Nor between August 17, after his return to Washington, and the end of August, did he report to the American people that as an outcome of the conference any special memorandum on vital relations with Japan had been handed to the Japanese Ambassador in Washington. Judging by outward appearances, relations with Japan after the conference seemed to follow the indefinite course of the previous weeks, as if nothing signifying a new stage in Japanese affairs had been reached or acted upon.

Reporting on the day of August 17, 1941, in Washington, the *New York Times* stated that the President and Secretary Hull had held a long conference and that, it was believed, the principal subject discussed was the

can citizens detained by the Japanese Government.¹² On leaving the White House, Secretary Hull gave reporters no details. Indeed, he merely indulged in one of his customary generalizations: "It was a general exchange of information in which we were bringing each other up to date on the international situation; we discussed all phases of the international situation in which either of us was interested." At his press conference the next day, Secretary Hull, speaking of the White House conference of the previous day, August 17, told correspondents that he had then considered with the President the Far Eastern situation; and, in a vein unusually light for Mr. Hull, he cautioned correspondents that he and the President had "talked about every part of the geography of the planet. Every geographical area, he emphasized, was discussed to a greater or lesser extent." ¹³ Such was the official information given to the American public on foreign affairs for August 17,

1941-¹⁴

At his conference with congressional leaders on August 18,

the President referred to the possibility of "shooting" troubles in the Far East, but he told them that no "new commitments" had been made at the Atlantic Conference. Furthermore, he apparently gave them no hint that relations with Japan were at, or approaching, a danger point. On the contrary, the *New*

York Times, in its account of this meeting, said: "The result of the President's report to the Congressional group was a lifting of spirits among some of them, who had thought that the Roosevelt-Churchill conference meant early steps that would take this country near to the brink of war." ¹⁶

During the period immediately following the Atlantic Conference, newspaper dispatches, dated at various points in the world, asserted that negotiations with Japan were proceeding feverishly, with the United States pressing for some kind of culmination. A few examples from

be near the breaking point after a long conference between Ambassador Grew and Foreign Minister Toyoda; for Mr. Grew warned Mr. Toyoda that unless Japan made fundamental alterations in her foreign policy, American pressure on Japan would be intensified. Chungking, August 18: A survey of the Burma road has been made for the United States Government and traffic is increasing over the line to the Chinese war capital. London, August 20: Authoritative quarters were rejecting the idea of appeasing Japan. Hyde Park, August 22: American changes in the tariff on crab meat strike a severe blow at one of Japan's important and far-flung enterprises. London, August 24: Prime Minister Churchill declared in his speech on the Atlantic Conference that, if President Roosevelt's negotiations with Japan ended in trouble, "we shall of course range ourselves unhesitatingly at the side of the United States."

Speculations on the new course of American-Japanese affairs since the Atlantic Conference, Japan's complaints about "encirclement," and Prime Minister Churchill's offer to join the United States in war with Japan, if it came, were treated in a statement by Secretary Hull, on August 25. As far as press reports went, nothing new had been brought up in the form of an American note to Japan. The United States was still standing for the principles of 1937 and what Mr. Hull was fond of calling "international morality"; and, if his statement was comprehensive, President Roosevelt in his latest exchanges with the Japanese Government was merely emphasizing the doctrine of the Kellogg Pact of 1928, the revision of treaties by peaceful methods, and respect for international law. Such at least was the impression conveyed by the *New York Times* report of Secretary Hull's conference on August 25:

Secretary of State Cordell Hull declared today that conversations with Japan have been purely informal and emphasized that any settlement of difficulties with Japan

for international law as a sound basis for international dealings. The Secretary of State thus denied London reports that the United States was seeking an agreement with Japan upon the basis of neutralization of Siam and Indo-China. He made clear that the fundamental position of this government in relation to Japan had not altered.

Mr. Hull made his statements today when asked in a press conference whether he cared to comment upon the assertions made in a speech yesterday by Prime Minister Winston Churchill to the effect that, while the United States is seeking a friendly settlement with Japan, in the event of trouble in the Far East, Britain would range herself at the side of the United States.

The Secretary refused to comment directly upon Mr. Churchill's speech, remarking that, while he always was prepared to pay the highest tribute to the remarkable addresses of the British Prime Minister, he did not care to take up or analyze any particular point in this speech.

Asked specifically about Mr. Churchill's statement that the United States was seeking to arrive at "a fair and amicable settlement that would give Japan the utmost reassurances regarding her legitimate interests," Mr. Hull stressed that the informal conversation he had on Saturday with Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura, the Japanese Ambassador, was typical of the kind of talks that were going on.

The Secretary of State refused to answer a point-blank question as to whether this government had received definite proposals for a settlement of differences from Japan, either through Joseph

C. Grew, American Ambassador in Tokyo, or Admiral Nomura. The impression gained by many reporters was that the conversations with Japan were at a delicate stage and that the Secretary was reluctant to discuss them, but did not want a wrong impression to get abroad about this government's attitude.¹⁶

By August 29 it was known that Ambassador Nomura had delivered to President Roosevelt a personal letter from the Japanese Premier, Prince Konoye. This information was interpreted by journalists to mean that

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ities in their respective governments. Would President Roosevelt seize this occasion to attempt an adjustment of some kind? At a press conference on August 29, he took up the question. As the *New York Times* reported the discussion:

President Roosevelt announced at his press conference today that he would send a reply to the personal letter he had received from Prince Fumimaro Konoye, the Japanese Premier, in connection with the conversations that seek an improvement in relations between the United States and Japan.

In view of the delicacy of the situation, Mr. Roosevelt confined his definite comment on the discussions to that one statement. . . .

Mr. Roosevelt gave no intimation of the nature of the reply that he would make to the Premier nor of the time when it would be sent. The text of the letter from Prince Konoye continued to be held in confidence though it was generally understood to be conciliatory in tone and to urge conversations looking to an adjustment of differences.

The situation was admittedly delicate, and for that reason President Roosevelt discouraged questions on it at his press conference. "Could you say whether you believe that war can be averted in the Pacific?" he was asked.

He would not be led into a discussion on that question, dismissing it with the remark that the Pacific was too wide to merit a response. Generally, he volunteered, all that could be said about the Pacific situation was that there was no news today.¹⁷

Secretary Hull was equally uncommunicative in commenting publicly on Premier Konoye's personal and friendly letter urging a settlement of troubles in the Pacific by direct consultation. In a style already made familiar by usage for more than eight years, the Secretary employed many words to say little; conversations were in a preliminary, exploratory stage and nothing definite could be revealed at the moment:

Without minimizing the importance or the seriousness of the diplomatic conversations with Japan that were marked by the

Cordell Hull made clear at his press conference today that the conversations were only in the preliminary stage and that no definite conclusions had been reached or were yet possible.

His remarks, made in response to questions of newspaper correspondents, were directed to reports in the Far East and elsewhere of programs, understandings or virtual agreements that already had been made.

Asked whether Prince Konoye had made any specific proposals in his message to the President, Mr. Hull said that the conversations were exploratory and would not reach the stage contemplated in the question unless or until they had passed beyond into the phase of negotiations. He made the same reply in response to further questions concerning some Tokyo reports that a basic understanding already had been reached.

Then he went further in minimizing the present status of the conversations in response to a question as to whether he felt there was any reason for concern on the part of other interested powers in the Far East that the so-called united front in that area might collapse.

When he said that an exploration was being conducted in the nature of an inquiry into relations between Japan and the United States, he said he meant that casual conversations were taking place on the whole question to determine just what they might reveal. This, he added, did not signify that the discussions had taken on the character of negotiations.¹⁸

At length Premier Konoye's letter to President Roosevelt was reported by the *New York Herald Tribune* to be a proposal for a personal conference between the President and the Premier "somewhere in the Pacific" for the purpose of adjusting difficulties between the two governments and making a general settlement. The report was, however, soon quashed by an official statement given out at the White House, September 3. As reported in the *New York Times*:

White House Secretary Stephen Early denied today that Premier Prince Fumimaro Konoye of Japan had invited President Roosevelt to confer at a conference in the Pacific.¹⁹

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Mr. Early made this statement after discussing with Mr. Roosevelt the New York Herald Tribune's report that such an invitation had been extended.

"1. The President has no invitation.

"2. If the Herald Tribune had seen fit to check with the White House before the publication of the story I would have told them that.

"3. The only plan the President has involving a trip on the water in the immediate future is a cruise from Annapolis on the Chesapeake Bay and on the Potomac River.

"If the Herald Tribune cares to follow the President to Annapolis, they will readily see the falsity of this story."

Responding to a question, Mr. Early added that he did not believe "Premier Prince Konoye would be coming up Chesapeake Bay." *20

Mr. Early's statement of September 3, based on instructions from President Roosevelt, may have seemed amusing to him and the correspondents present; but news, other than official communications from the White House and State Department, indicated that the situation was grave and that Premier Konoye had sought to discuss it directly with the President in some manner. Journalists whose profession demanded efforts to obtain from official sources comments on news reports from various parts of the world, including Japan, sought an official explanation of the "Konoye affair," but were completely baffled.

Concerning the actual nature of this "affair," so momentous in the history of American relations with Japan, journalists learned little or nothing definite at the press conferences held at the White House and the State Department in September and October.²¹ What were the terms and conditions offered by Premier Konoye? What action, if any, was the

consultation at a meeting in the Pacific; and on August 28, the Japanese Ambassador handed to the President a message from Premier Konoye urging a meeting between the heads of the governments of the United States and Japan to discuss all

United States Foreign Policy, (July, 1943), pp. 712 f.

20. *New York Times*, September 4, 1941.

21. See below, Chap. XVI.

American Ambassador in Tokyo, Joseph C. Grew, urging upon President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull? What responses were the President and the Secretary making to Japanese overtures? With regard to these primary questions journalists in Washington received no concrete information whatever.

Two extracts from the *New York Times* reports of press conferences during this critical period fairly illustrate the kind of expositions which Secretary Hull and President Roosevelt regarded as fulfilling their obligations to the American people while then conducting foreign affairs of the gravest significance to the Republic:

Sept. 6. Secretary of State Cordell Hull said today that he was wondering what had happened to the exploratory conversations President Roosevelt was supposed to be conducting with the Japanese.

No developments have been announced since Admiral Kichi- saburo Nomura, the Japanese Ambassador, last week delivered to the President the personal letter from Prince Fumimaro Konoye, the Japanese Premier. This circumstance led newspaper correspondents to remark at Mr. Hull's press conference that they were wondering what had happened to the conversations. Secretary Hull replied that he was wondering, too.

He had nothing new to communicate to the correspondents, he said, but when he was asked whether something was being awaited from Japan he countered vaguely by saying that it really depended on the viewpoint.

President Roosevelt was also uncommunicative at his press conference. He referred questions on the conversations to Mr. Hull, who pleaded that he could not go into details at this time. An answer would be sent by the President to Prince Konoye in due course, he said, adding that the matter of a reply was not being overlooked in any way.

Asked whether a continuation of the conversations was awaiting dispatch of the reply to the Premier, Mr. Hull again countered by saying that both sides would be consulted before that question was answered.²²

Sept. 10. Recurring reports, particularly in Tokyo, that a

liminary agreement looking to an adjustment of relations between the United States and Japan was to be expected momentarily were regarded as premature today in view of a brief oral reply made by Secretary of State Cordell Hull to questions at his press conference today.

Mr. Hull said that he had no advices that a statement was imminent. He did not define what he considered was covered by the term "imminent," but it was assumed that he was expecting nothing in this category within the next few days or perhaps longer. This is apart from what Prince Fumimaro Konoye, the Japanese Premier, may say in Tokyo.²³

AFTER OCTOBER 16, 1941

Ma ny reports of events in the press after the fall of the Konoye Cabinet on October 16 seemed to indicate that intransigent militarists were in power at Tokyo and that an explosion into war might happen at any time. From Manila, October 16, came a dispatch in which Francis Sayre, American Commis sioner in the Philippines, was reported as saying that the United States was moving close to the brink of war and that the Axis would be smashed. From Tokyo, on the same day, Otto Tolischus reported to the *New York Times* that the Director of Japanese Naval Intelligence had declared that the relations of the United States and Japan were "now approaching the final parting of the ways." From Shanghai, Oc tober 16, came a dispatch stating that the Central China *Daily News*, organ of the Japanese-sponsored regime in Nanking, had asserted that war between Japan and the United States "is inevitable."

The news was alarming but negotiations or at least conver sations between the United States and Japan continued after the substitution of the Tojo Cabinet for the Konoye Cabinet in Tokyo. For a time, however, there was a lull in reports of official comments at Washington bearing on relations with the Japanese Government. Between October 16 and November

15 little more than speculations appeared in the

from Washington to the *New York Times*. Few of them were substantial or illuminating as to actual propositions and counterpropositions. On November 15, however, a break in the uniformity of press reports came with the announcement that Saburo Kurusu had arrived in Washington as a special agent from Tokyo to assist Ambassador Nomura and that he was "hoping for peace," in renewed attempts at a meeting of minds. Then a brief period of official reticence ensued during which, the public supposed, exchanges of views or exploratory conversations were going on.

A few days after his arrival notice was served on Mr. Kurusu that the United States was ready for war—in a dispatch to the *New York Times* from Washington, dated November 19, written by Arthur Krock, who often spoke with authority for the State Department. Mr. Krock asserted that the familiar thesis—the United States cannot defend the Philippines—had been challenged by two factors. "One is the naval alliance ²⁴ with Great Britain, joining for all practical purposes the fleets of the two nations in the Pacific." The other was the extension of lend-lease to the Soviet Union with a view to opening up terminal points in Siberia for American fighting planes flown from Manila. Mr. Krock then turned directly to the Japanese special agent, saying that Mr. Kurusu might learn of these circumstances officially before he left Washington or by "reading this dispatch." As if possessing secrets of the United States Government, Mr. Krock added that supporting details for his statements were locked up in the War and Navy Departments.²⁵

Reports from Washington, dated November 20 and 22, alleged that each official conference with Ambassadors Nomura and Kurusu had been held at the request of the Japanese; they also noted that the State Department was being extremely proper in its public statements on the negotiations but that "it is now clear that the United States is not prepared to appease the Japanese even on minor points." November 22, Washing

ton date line, a dispatch announced that Secretary Hull had conferred with the representatives of Great Britain, China, Australia, and the Netherlands. According to a Washington date-line message, November 24, Secretary Hull was having conferences with these diplomats and no progress was being made in negotiations with Japan. The following day a *New York Times* dispatch reported discussions with representatives of Great Britain, China, and the Netherlands, separately, at the White House and conferences of top officials in preparation for a major move in the Far East.

Two Associated Press dispatches, dated Washington, November 26, revealed that an impasse had been reached in the negotiations with the Japanese representatives. First, Japan faced a showdown and must negotiate on American principles or take the consequences of resuming her forward movement in the waters of southeastern Asia. Second, "The United States tonight handed Japan a blunt statement of policy, which, in formed quarters said, virtually ended all chance of agreement between the two countries on explosive Far Eastern issues." On November 28, the *New York Times* published a special article from Washington, dated November 27, to the effect that United States officials were satisfied that they had exhausted all efforts at a solution of Pacific problems and had, for that reason, restated "basic principles." From Tokyo, Otto Tolischus reported to the *Times* that the Japanese Government now saw an end of the negotiations as a result of the United States memorandum of November 26.

The record of news as presented day by day in the press dispatches was amplified, if not confirmed in all

26. In the absence of official reports of press conferences, such as appear in President Roosevelt's *Public Papers and Addresses* for the years before 1941, reliance must be placed on newspaper accounts. In reply to a letter from me, dated September 11, 1946, the Director of The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, said, on September 19, 1946, that the official minutes of President Roosevelt's press conferences for 1941 "are not available to public inspection at this time."

Times, illustrate the reserved, uncommunicative, and noncommittal nature of statements by President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull.

November 14, 1941, President Roosevelt:

Mr. Roosevelt answered in the affirmative a question as to whether he believed that "the American people realized the seriousness of the Far Eastern situation." He raised his voice to emphasize that he sincerely trusted not, when asked "whether there will be war right away in the Far East."

"Can war with Japan be avoided?" a reporter bluntly inquired. The Executive answered that question slowly after a moment's pause. If he replied no, he said, the answer would be subject to widespread interpretation. If he answered yes, that would be a pure guess. No interpreter of the national scene knows the answer,

he continued.

Asked whether the United States was prepared to make certain that the Burma Road would be kept open, the President said this problem was related to too many others to be answered. Questioned thereafter as to whether he cared to comment upon widely credited reports that Japanese insistence on concessions in China had hampered American-Japanese negotiations, the President indicated that he thought the question and any answer ill-advised at this time.²⁷

November 20, 1941, State Department:

The Japanese envoys, Saburo Kurosu and Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura, having received "new advices" from Tokyo, returned today to the State Department, where they continued to discuss with Secretary of State Cordell Hull the possibilities of reaching a general settlement in the Pacific.

At the conclusion of the forty-five-minute meeting State Department officials said that the meeting was held to discuss the international situation and was still "exploratory" in nature.

No further appointments have been made, the officials said, although they added that it was "expected" that the Japanese envoys would return to discuss a readjustment of United States-Japanese relations.

Although both parties have been reticent in their statements¹⁷

about the tone and substance of the conversations, it is known that Mr. Hull has made perfectly clear to the Japanese envoys that no settlement between the two nations is possible on the basis of Premier Hideki Tojo's statement Monday before the Japanese Diet.²⁸

November 21, 1941, Secretary Hull and President Roosevelt:

Mr. Hull met with his Far Eastern advisers in the State Department this morning and was prepared to see the Japanese officials after the Cabinet meeting, this afternoon or tonight. However, the Japanese spent the day in conferences at their embassy going over the situation in the light of yesterday's meeting, and were not prepared to go ahead at the State Department. The precise nature of the snag was not revealed by the embassy.

In the meantime Secretary Hull sought to dispel assumptions that the meetings were being held only as the Japanese requested. He explained at his press conference that the talks were being arranged by mutual agreements. He reiterated that the conversations still were of an exploratory nature.

President Roosevelt, when asked at his press conference whether he had any cause for optimism over the negotiations dismissed the subject by replying that the question was like asking if a man had stopped beating his wife.²⁹

November 22, 1941, State Department:

After tonight's conference between Mr. Hull and the two Japanese envoys, a State Department spokesman said their talk was an expansion of previous discussions and that talks would continue next week.³⁰

November 23, 1941, State Department:

Official silence was maintained again today at the State Department. Officials said that the Japanese envoys, Saburo Kurusu and Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura, had not talked to any United States official since their conversations with Secretary of State Cordell Hull last night.³¹

²⁸ *Ibid.* November 21, 1941.

November 24, 1941, Secretary Hull:

At this press conference this morning Secretary Hull insisted that the Far Eastern conferences in the main had thus far been confined to talk and added that discussions had not yet given way to decisions.³²

November 25, 1941, Secretary Hull:

At a press conference this afternoon, Mr. Hull was not prepared to go into details, but he said he probably would meet with the Japanese envoys very soon. Pressed for some light on how the conversations were proceeding, he replied that it was too early for a basis of negotiation to have been reached and that further talks would be necessary before he would know that such a basis could be reached. Thus far, he said, the discussions have related mainly to the pros and cons of first one question and then of another.

Mr. Hull professed not to be in a position at this time to predict the outcome, but it was believed in usually well-informed diplomatic circles that the conversations would come to a climax before very long and that they would not drag on interminably.³³

November 26, 1941, State Department and Secretary Hull:

The Japanese representatives were handed for their consideration a document that is the culmination of conferences back and forth during recent weeks. It is unnecessary to repeat what has been said so often in the past that it rests on certain basic principles with which the correspondents should be entirely familiar in the light of many repetitions.³⁴

On November 26, 1941, the day that Secretary Hull handed to the Japanese Ambassadors the memorandum that was to prove fateful in history, the *New York Times* reported the action under the headline: United States Gives Terms to the Japanese; Plan Clings to "Basic Principles." In this report the *Times* included the official statement given above. It added that proposals looking to the readjustment of relations

32. *Ibid.*, November 25, 1941.

33. *Ibid.* November 26, 1941 p. 1

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between Japan and the United States were handed by Secretary Hull late today to Mr. Nomura and Mr. Kurusu; and that this action marked the culmination of the first phase of the conversations that have been in progress since the arrival of Mr. Kurusu ten days ago.

Although no detailed explanation of the proposals was vouchsafed [the report continued], it was assumed that they embraced a plan for permitting further discussions of the problems between the two nations. . . . It was observed that as they [the Japanese Ambassadors] emerged from Mr. Hull's office that they were beaming. The State Department contented itself with a statement to newspaper correspondents to the effect that the United States was adhering to basic principles. From this it was assumed that the peace proposal enunciated by Mr. Hull on July 16, 1937, was being kept in mind.³⁵

The Associated Press dispatch of November 26, from Washington, on the memorandum handed to the Japanese was laconic. In substance it declared: the United States and Japan have failed to find a formula for a peaceful settlement of their differences after seven months of diplomatic negotiations, it was learned authoritatively tonight, and peace or war in the Far East may hinge on Japan's next move; informed diplomatic headquarters predicted that Japan, faced with a show down on her militantly proclaimed objectives, must now decide to negotiate on the basis of American principles or face the consequences of resuming her armed march southward.³⁸ More definite was the United Press dispatch, dated Washington, November 26, 1941. By some process the author of that report had succeeded in discovering the essential terms of Secretary Hull's memorandum and the realities of the situation—as distinguished from the generalities offered by Secretary Hull which supposedly left open the door for "further discussions" with Japan, "looking to the readjustment of relations between the United States and Japan." The United

Press dispatch read:

The United States handed Japan a blunt statement of policy which, informed quarters said, virtually ended all chances of an agreement between the two countries on the explosive Far Eastern issues. The United States Government is reported to be demanding, as the price of any concessions it grants, that Japan abandon plans for future aggression, pull her armies out of China and French Indochina, restore the "open door" policy in China, and substitute peaceful negotiations for the sword in achieving her so-called co-prosperity sphere.³⁷

In a special dispatch from Washington to the *New York Times*, dated November 26, 1941, its correspondent, Bertram Hulen, gave what was to all appearances the State Department's "line," namely, that basic principles had been handed to Japan, that the door to further negotiations was still open, and that all depended on Japan's reply. Mr. Hulen said: "All this does not mean that the negotiations have been completed. Everything now depends upon the Japanese reaction. The next move is up to them." He then dwelt at some length on the opposition of China to any agreement between the United States and Japan which did not conform to Chinese views of the interests of that country. Having some inside information, Mr. Hulen stated that the Tokyo Government was believed prepared to give assurance against aggressive actions in the future, and perhaps in some measure to treat its agreement with the Axis as a dead letter in return for assurance of peace in the Pacific for the present and some modification of American economic restrictions. But, also in line with the State Department, Mr. Hulen added that "a big question concerned the bona fides"—would or could Japan abide by "the terms of an agreement" ?³⁸

AFTER NOVEMBER 27, 1941

St a t e m e n t s from the White House and the Department State subsequent to those of November 26, and they were

37. *Ibid.*, November 27, 1941.

38. *Ibid.*

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numerous, altered in no fundamental respect the situation as described in previous communications to the public or the line disclosed in Mr. Hulen's dispatch. Such statements continued to indicate an increasing tension in relations with Japan, but they represented President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull as waiting day after day for the Japanese reply to the memorandum of November 26, with some prospects of a peaceful adjustment in sight, up until the final day of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. There were in the official communications, it is true, strong notes of concern over the continued southward movement of Japanese forces in the Far East and over the possibility of a breakdown in relations with Japan; but there was no hint that a call upon Congress for authority to take strong action was contemplated, that peaceful relations with Japan were de facto at an end, or that even the possibility of a pacific settlement of troubles in the Far East was now, for all practical purposes, out of the question.

The following extracts from the *New York Times* reports on official statements after November 27, 1941, illustrate the essentials of the position taken by President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull in their communications to the American public on relations with Japan during this critical period.

All that President Roosevelt would say in a long press conference this morning was that he might have to return from Warm Springs, Ga., for which he departed at 3 p.m. today, because of the Japanese situation, and that, under existing circumstances, American merchant vessels in the Pacific would not be armed. He added that this decision, made by the State and Navy Departments and the Maritime Commission, might be altered by events at any time.

Mr. Roosevelt stressed the words "under existing circumstances" and a correspondent asked: "Mr. President, how long do you expect existing circumstances to continue?" It would be much better, Mr. Roosevelt replied, to ask that question in

November 29, 1941, Secretary Hull:

As for the conversations between Japan and the United States, Secretary Hull maintained at his press conference that there was nothing to be said until the Tokyo government indicated its attitude on the communication he gave last Wednesday to Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura and Saburo Kurusu, the Japanese envoys. He described it as a communication to get some basis, a basis presumably looking to a readjustment of relations, through the suggestions he incorporated in applying American principles to specific matters.

Mr. Hull referred to the Army and Navy a question as to whether a Japanese move from French Indo-China into Thailand at this time would result in a major conflict in the Pacific. The armed services had no views to offer on the subject.

However, Secretary Hull took pains at his press conference to point out as important the presidential ruling against arming American merchant ships for the present on routes not only in the Pacific but to ports of Portugal, Spain and adjacent islands. He emphasized that this applied to both areas, not to the Pacific alone.⁴⁰

November 29, 1941, President Roosevelt:

With tension high in Washington, President Roosevelt during his brief vacation at Warm Springs, Ga., took advantage of the occasion to make a short address that hinted at war, but vaguely and inconclusively. Mr. Merriman Smith, veteran press representative at presidential conferences and on presidential trips, has described the scene. The President's "speech began in customarily hackneyed channels: 'Glad to be back . . . my other home . . . always inspired to be here.' He interjected a few gentle wisecracks, but with an imperceptible change of direction, moved into a discussion of the war. The newspaper men knew this sudden change in the tone of his remarks was intended for them rather than the polio patients." After speaking briefly about the plight of

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giving. "The newspaper men knew that something ominous and world-shaking was about to be said. The Roosevelt build up to a smashing remark was unmistakable." After another side reference, about the Army-Navy football game that day, President Roosevelt declared that American boys at naval and military academies might be actually fighting some time in the near future. Thereupon newspaper men made a wild dash for the telegraph office: "Flash—Warm Springs, Georgia—Roosevelt says we may be fighting within a year."⁴¹

The exact order and wording of President Roosevelt's in direct statement to the American public on November 29, as reported in newspapers, varied slightly, although there was no difference as to the significance of his declaration respecting the possibility that the United States might be at war soon. In the *New York Times* the following report of the address appeared:

"I think we can offer up a little silent prayer that these people will be able to hold a Thanksgiving more like an American Thanksgiving next year. That is something of a dream, perhaps.

"In days like these it is always possible that our boys at the military and naval academies may actually be fighting for the defense of these American institutions of ours."

The President said in his talk he had thought much during the past weeks while dealing with international problems in Washington, about the possibility that another year might see American boys at war.

The American people had reason for thanksgiving, he continued, since "We're one of the largest nations of the world and nearly all other large nations are at war or defending themselves or conquered or else the lives they used to live have been completely blotted out."⁴²

Whatever the exact language employed by the President in his address on November 29, he had, as reported, made two

41. A. M. Smith, *Thank You, Mr. President: A White House Notebook* (Harper, 1946), pp. 107 ff. The President left Washington on November 28 and

statements bearing on the possibility of war. The first was: "In days like these it is always possible that our boys at the military and naval academies may actually be fighting for the defense of these American institutions of ours." In form and substance this statement was not out of harmony with his campaign pledges of 1940 and with views which he had often expressed publicly, namely, that military preparations were for the defense of the United States and that the country would fight in case of attack. Here was nothing novel in the long list of his public pronouncements on foreign policy since he became a candidate for the presidency in 1932.

President Roosevelt's second statement, as reported in the press, though tentative and speculative, seemed to have, however, a different ring. It ran to the effect that while dealing with international problems during the past weeks he had thought much about "the possibility that another year might see American boys at war." On its face there was nothing new about this statement either. There had always been a possibility that American boys might be at war within a year, in case of attack.

But taken in the context of news of disturbances through out the world in November, 1941, this statement by the President could be considered a broad hint that war might be coming at least within a year. Here, at all events, was the shadowy appearance of a presidential declaration that the policy of defense for the United States might not keep the country out of war, that war might come, after all that had been said and done about the defense and peace of the United States.⁴³ Yet the President's statement, if intended to be a war warning, was so casual, cryptic, and hypothetical in character that it conveyed no definite impression to Congress or the American people. Besides, three days later, he declared publicly that "the

43. In my personal papers is a letter from a distinguished newspaper man who attended the President's press conferences and public meetings for many months and heard the President's address on November 20. In this letter the journalist

United States is at peace with Japan and perfectly friendly, too.”

December 2, 1941, President Roosevelt:

An occasion for the new reference to peace and friendship with Japan in this critical period was another report on the southward movement of Japanese forces in Indo-China. If numerous press dispatches from various points in the world were correct, it was the continued advance of those forces which was to bring Great Britain, the United States, and the Netherlands into war with the Japanese Empire.⁴⁴ Yet in a statement to the press on December 2, 1941, President Roosevelt treated this ominous event as if it was an incident in American relations with Japan, about which he had directed an inquiry to the Japanese Government—not an ultimatum with a time limit—in the course of conversations which were still peaceful and friendly in nature. Such was the statement as reported by the *New York Times*:

President Roosevelt announced that he formally asked the Japanese Government today why it was sending so many military, naval and air forces into Indo-China. The President insisted that his request did not represent an ultimatum.

Asked about the inquiry, the President replied as follows:

Since April the United States Government has been discussing with the Japanese Government some method of arriving at the objective of permanent peace in the whole Pacific area. It seemed for a time as if progress were being made and, during the period until late June, this government assumed that there would be no act contrary to the desired end of peace.

The United States Government was, therefore, somewhat surprised when, at the end of June, the Japanese Government sent troops—the President thought a limited number—into French Indo-China after brief negotiations with the French Vichy Government. At the conclusion of these negotiations the Vichy Government let it be understood rather clearly it had agreed because it was powerless to do otherwise.

Some time thereafter Japanese-American conversations were

stood clearly no additional territory should be taken by any one during the negotiations.

The other day this government got word from various sources that there already were in Indo-China large additional Japanese forces—naval, air and land—and that other forces were on the way. Even without the arrival of forces in transit, Japanese strength greatly exceeded the original limitation agreed to by the French, and forces on the way are many times greater.

The question, therefore, has been asked of the Japanese Government, at the President's request, of what intention the Japanese Government has as to the future, eliminating the possibility that the forces might be for the policing of Indo-China, which is a very peaceful spot. The President hopes to get a reply very shortly.

"Was any time limit set for the reply?" a reporter asked.

That was a silly question, Mr. Roosevelt answered in replying in the negative. Those tactics were employed in the last century, but not in this. The United States is at peace with Japan and perfectly friendly, too, he added.⁴⁵

December 3, 1941, Secretary Hull:

The following day, December 3, Secretary Hull gave, at his press conference, a view of the situation that differed slightly from the President's version on the previous day. The Secretary, as if awaiting information on Japanese reactions to his statement of basic principles on November 26, said that the continuation of conversations with Japan depended on her answers to inquiries about Japanese troop movements and to his memorandum of November 26. Since he did not then know exactly when Japan's reply would be forthcoming, Mr. Hull indicated that he "was, therefore, not in a position to predict whether there would be further conversations with the Japanese envoys." He once more reviewed American principles of international morality but he spoke as if he thought that a stage for considering "a basis for wider conversations relating to a peaceful settlement in the Pacific" might yet be reached.

On this press conference of December 3, the *New York*

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Secretary of State Cordell Hull outlined at his press conference the course of the exploratory conversations with Tokyo's envoys. Whether the conversations will continue will depend upon Japan's answers concerning her garrison in Indo-China and secondly, on the document Mr. Hull gave Ambassador Kichisaburo

Nomura last Wednesday.

Mr. Hull did not know when Tokyo would reply to the President's request for information or to his own document. He was, therefore, not in a position to predict whether there would be further conversations with Japanese envoys.

The Secretary viewed Japan's policies as based on force, in contrast to the American policy of following peaceful means and observing doctrines based on law, justice and morals. All phases of the subject had been taken up in the exploratory conversations, he said, including scores of minor phases and numerous major ones. Mr. Hull considered his outline of the conversations illuminating on the more important aspects of the situation and a statement of the fundamentals of the situation, as he described it, looking

both ways.

He recalled that, since last Spring, there had been, from time to time, purely exploratory discussions between Admiral Nomura and his embassy staff and Secretary Hull and his associates in the State Department, as well as occasionally between President Roosevelt and the Ambassador. These conversations were held to ascertain whether a basis could be reached for negotiations looking to a readjustment of relations in the Pacific area.

While these discussions were in progress, Mr. Hull indicated their exploratory nature to representatives of other interested governments in the Pacific area, such as Great Britain, Australia, the Netherlands and China. Those governments understood that if a stage could be reached where there would be something fundamental, from their viewpoint, it would afford a basis for wider conversations relating to a peaceful settlement in the Pacific. That area, Mr. Hull pointed out, included all the continents and islands and seas and populations, covering nearly one-half the earth. The really basic questions that came up during these conversations, he explained, were two.

quered. That embodied, he emphasized, a twin doctrine of conquest of territory belonging to others and subjugation of the peoples, with the establishment of a military despotism in the most arbitrary manner over the whole political, economic and social and moral affairs of conquered peoples.

There are examples of it, he declared, in Europe under Reichsführer Hitler's policies, and in China.

The opposing view of government and government policy, Secretary Hull said, included the basic doctrines of law, justice, and morals and equality of treatment among nations, especially in relation to commercial opportunities, commercial life and peaceful settlement of matters in controversy rather than their settlement by force.

This and the other basic provisions of the so-called fourteen peace points that he enunciated and sent to all governments in July, 1937, he declared, represented the other viewpoint, as this government understood it, preached and practiced it.

So, he explained, all the exploratory conversations revolved around one phase or another of these two opposing basic policies and principles of government. No more advanced stage of determined questions had been reached, Mr. Hull said, even in a preliminary way. During the many months, he went on, there were casual and informal conversations, unofficial talks in the main about scores of minor phases raised by the discussions and numerous major phases.

His friends representing the Japanese Government, Mr. Hull intimated, presented only in partial form during the exploratory and informal conversations a document on the subject. So he deemed it natural and logical after months of discussion and in creasing confusion growing out of utterances and actions of other governments and partial suggestions, as compared with a broad basic settlement, that he should undertake to bring the whole basic phases of the situation up to date by handing the Japanese a document that was comprehensive and basic.

In response to questions, Mr. Hull said he understood the British were keeping this government informed of the reinforcement of naval power at Singapore and that the

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As the early days of December passed, news dispatches from Washington and other points in the world continued to intimate the approach of a real crisis in the relations of the United States with Japan, preparations for cooperative action against Japan by the United States, the British Commonwealth of Nations, the Netherlands, and China, and the imminence of war. But official communications from the White House and Department of State, as reported in the press, indicated that relations with Japan, if strained, were still intact and “perfectly friendly,” as President Roosevelt said on December 2, and that the President and Secretary Hull were awaiting, as if otherwise uninformed, new official statements from the Government of Japan respecting its intentions, particularly the reply of Tokyo to the American memorandum of November 26. According to the appearances reflected in the press dispatches expressing their views, President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull regarded the situation as critical but were still of the opinion that Japan might shrink from war, might come back with proposals for new conversations looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Even President Roosevelt’s appeal to the Japanese Emperor for peace and cooperation in overcoming “the deep and far-reaching emergency,” broadcast on Saturday night, December 6, seemed to show that, while the President thought the outlook for a
nacific

CHAPTER VIII

The Attack—Official

THE attack which was to release President Roosevelt from his numerous commitments to neutrality and peace for the United States and to meet “the challenge of critics,”¹ came on December 7, 1941. It came not from German ships of war in the Atlantic, which the President’s supporters and advocates of war had been watching with expectancy, but from Japanese bombers in the Pacific, on the strategic American outpost in Hawaii. Moreover, it came with such a terrific burst of fire power that it brought disaster to the American fleet in Pearl Harbor and inflicted appalling losses on American armed forces and civilians.

Although the extent of the catastrophe was not officially revealed for many months, enough was soon disclosed by American newspapers to make it plain that the United States had suffered a major defeat; that the Navy was badly crippled for prosecuting an effective war against Japan immediately; that this nation confronted a long and grueling struggle to overcome the Japanese. As if to make the conflict global, Germany and Italy, four days later, December 11, declared war on the United States and thus the country became engaged in a two-front war, handicapped initially by the devastation at Pearl Harbor.

On the following day, December 8, President Roosevelt went before Congress to call for a declaration that a state of war had “existed” since the attack. In support of the call, he said:

Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy — the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

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The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, i hour after Japanese air squadrons had com menced bombing in Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to the Secretary of State a for mal reply to a recent American message. While this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace. . . .

Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. . . .

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Em pire.²

In a radio broadcast to the nation, December 9, 1941, Presi dent Roosevelt again characterized the Japanese attack as a

2. For the quotations given on this and following pages from President Roosevelt's addresses and messages in December, 1941, see Senate Document No. 148 and House Document No. 458, 77th Congress, First Session, 1941. President Roosevelt's official thesis that the United States was at peace with Japan on De cember 7, 1941, was engaged in peace conversation with Japanese envoys at the moment, and was completely surprised by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor has become a part of a growing literature to that effect. It has even found expres sion in a judicial opinion: The United States Circuit Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit, November 6, 1946, said in the case of *The New York Life Insurance Company vs. Louise Bennion* (p. 2): "When the attack [on Pearl Harbor] was launched, we were not only at peace with Japan, but were actually engaged in a peace conference with her envoys. It was deliberately and strategically planned, and while recognized as a possibility in view of our strained relations, came as a complete surprise to our civil, military, and naval authorities. About one hour after the commencement of the attack . . . the Japanese envoys in Washington delivered a note to our State Department informing our Govern ment of the severance of diplomatic relations." Insofar as this statement is a part of the iudicial reasoning necessary to sustain the

sudden, unexpected, treacherous act committed while relations between the two countries were peaceful.

He said:

The sudden criminal attacks perpetrated by the Japanese in the Pacific provide the climax of a decade of international immorality.

. . . The Japanese have treacherously violated the long-standing peace between us. . . .

I can say with utmost confidence that no Americans today or a thousand years hence, need feel anything but pride in our patience and our efforts through all the years toward achieving a peace in the Pacific which would be fair and honorable to every nation, large or small. And no honest person, today or a thousand years hence, will be able to suppress a sense of indignation and horror at the treachery committed by the military dictators of Japan, under the very shadow of the flag of peace borne by their special envoys in our midst.³

In a special message to Congress, December 15, 1941, President Roosevelt reviewed the historical relations of the United States with the Far East, including Japan. He referred to the Japanese proposal for a modus vivendi on November 20 and declared:

Such a proposal obviously offered no basis for a peaceful settlement or even for a temporary adjustment. The American Government, in order to clarify the issues, presented to the Japanese Government on November 26, a clear-cut plan for a broad but simple settlement. . . . In the midst of these conversations, we learned that new contingents of Japanese armed forces and new masses of equipment were moving into Indo-China. Toward the end of November these movements were intensified. I

promptly asked the Japanese Government for a frank statement of the reasons for increasing its forces in Indo-China. I was given an evasive and specious reply. We did

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in mind, on the evening of December 6 last, I addressed a personal message to the Emperor of Japan. . . . Japan's real reply, how ever, made by Japan's war lords and evidently formulated many days before, took the form of the attack which had already been made without warning upon our territories at various points in the Pacific. There is the record, for all history to read in amaze ment, in sorrow, in horror, and in disgust! We are now at war. We are fighting in self-defense. We are fighting in defense of our national existence, of our right to be secure, of our right to enjoy the blessings of peace. 4

Indications that the United States was at peace with Japan on December 7, when the attack came, and that conversations looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific were still going on, were given in two official releases on December 7—one by the State Department and the other by Secretary Hull. The first was worded as follows:

On November 26 the Secretary of State handed to the Japanese representative a document which stated the principles governing the policies of the Government of the United States towards the situation in the Far East and setting out suggestions for a com prehensive peaceful settlement covering the entire Pacific area.

At 1 p.m . today the Japanese Ambassador asked for an appoint ment for the Japanese representatives to see the Secretary of State. The appointment was made for 1:45 p.m . The Japanese represen tatives arrived at the office of the Secretary of State at 2:05 p.m . They were received by the Secretary at 2:20 p.m . The Japanese Ambassador handed to the Secretary of State what was under stood to be a reply to the document handed to him by the Secre tary of State on November 26.

Secretary Hull carefully read the statement presented by the Japanese representatives and immediately turned to the Japanese Ambassador and with the greatest indignation said:

"I must say that in all my conversations with you [the Japanese Ambassador] during the last nine months I have never uttered one word of untruth. This is borne out

tortions—infamous falsehoods and distortions on a scale so huge that I never imagined until today that any Government on this planet was capable of uttering them.”

Secretary Hull’s statement read:

Japan has made a treacherous and utterly unprovoked attack on the United States.

At the very moment when representatives of the Japanese Government were discussing with representatives of this government at the request of the former, principles and courses of peace, the armed forces of Japan were preparing and assembling at various strategic points to launch new attacks and new aggressions upon nations and peoples with which Japan was professedly at peace, including the United States.

I am now releasing for the information of the American people the statement of principles governing the policies of the Government of the United States, and setting out suggestions for a comprehensive peaceful settlement covering the entire Pacific area, which I handed to the Japanese Ambassador on November 26, 1941.

I am likewise releasing the text of a Japanese reply thereto which was handed to me by the Japanese Ambassador today.

Before the Japanese Ambassador delivered this final statement from his government, the treacherous attack upon the United States had taken place.

This government has stood for all the principles that underlie fair dealing, peace, law and order, and justice between nations, and has steadfastly striven to promote and maintain that state of relations between itself and all other nations.

It is now apparent to the whole world that Japan in its recent professions of a desire for peace has been infamously false and fraudulent.

The tenor of the official thesis on the coming of war with Japan was maintained in the documents relative to the coming of war with Germany and Italy. After Germany

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On the morning of December 11 the Government of Germany, pursuing its course of world conquest, declared war against the United States.

The long known and the long expected has thus taken place. The forces endeavoring to enslave the entire world now are moving toward this hemisphere.

Never before has there been a greater challenge to life, liberty, and civilization.

Delay invites greater danger. Rapid and united effort by all the peoples of the world who are determined to remain free will insure a world victory of the forces of justice and of righteousness over the forces of savagery and of barbarism.

Italy also has declared war against the United States.

I therefore request the Congress to recognize a state of war between the United States and Germany and between the United States and Italy.

Franklin D. Roosevelt .

The White House ,

December 11, 1941.

The two resolutions of Congress recognized the existence of war with Germany and Italy and stated that the governments of those countries had “formally declared war against the Government and the people of the United States of America” and added that “the state of war between the United States” and those governments “which has thus been thrust upon the United States is hereby formally declared.” The resolutions authorized and directed the President to employ the armed forces and the resources of the United States to carry on the war against Germany and Italy.⁶

HAWAIIAN COMMANDERS OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED AS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PEARL HARBOR DISASTER

At last, with constitutional authority from Congress, the United States was at war; and the nation, with slight dissent, was united in the prosecution of the contest to a triumph at arms over the Axis Powers. But in the midst of the alarms and

5. For the war documents, see Senate Document No. 148, 77th Congress, First

tensions of the armed conflict, pertinent questions were asked persistently in Congress and outside. How did it happen that such a disaster befell American forces at Pearl Harbor? Was it due to the fact that the United States, at peace with Japan and “still in conversation with” the Japanese Government and Emperor “looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific,” was suddenly without forewarning caught off guard by the attack? Or had there been lack of alertness and incompetence somewhere in the chain of command from Washington to the high officers in charge at Hawaii—General Walter C. Short and Admiral Husband E. Kimmel?

Although the need of secrecy and precaution in time of war and the requirements of war were undoubtedly paramount considerations, such questions were widely discussed in the country. On Capitol Hill the possibility of a congressional investigation was suggested but discarded for the moment. While Senators and Representatives confined their wonderment to speculations on the subject, President Roosevelt acted. At the earliest possible moment, he sent Secretary Knox to Hawaii to inquire into the disaster and report to him. On the return of the Secretary in a few days, a brief statement on the catastrophe was made public but, for the purpose of withholding information on the losses at Pearl Harbor from the enemy powers and sustaining national morale, the report was brief, cautiously worded, and noncommittal as to responsibilities for the degree of success attained by the Japanese attack.

By an Executive order signed December 18, 1941, President Roosevelt appointed a commission of five men—two Army officers and two Navy officers, headed by Owen J. Roberts, Justice of the United States Supreme Court—to conduct an inquiry into the catastrophe at Pearl Harbor. In his order, the President instructed them:

to ascertain and report the facts relating to the attack made by Japanese armed forces upon the Territory of Hawaii on December 7, 1941.

bases for sound decisions whether any derelictions of duty or errors of judgment on the part of United States Army or Navy personnel contributed to such successes as were achieved by the enemy on the occasion mentioned; and, if so, what these derelictions or errors were, and who were responsible therefor.

The investigation was to be in the nature of an inquest and judicial proceeding, ending in a verdict of some kind. This fact was evident not only in the President's instructions but also in an action of Congress which supplemented the Executive order by granting to the commission power to summon witnesses and examine them under oath.

Besides being delimited in other important respects, the duty of the commission was restricted to an inquiry into and report on derelictions of duty and errors of judgment on the part of the United States Army and Navy personnel which might have contributed to the successes of the Japanese attack. In other words, the commission was apparently excluded from inquiring and reporting with regard to the responsibilities of the civilian authorities anywhere for the catastrophe at Pearl Harbor.

After conducting investigations in Washington and Hawaii, the Roberts Commission presented a "report" to the President, dated January 23, 1942, and made public the next day.®

With reference to responsibilities for the catastrophe at Pearl Harbor, the Conclusions of the Roberts Report, though numbered *seriatim*, fell into three parts.

The first part exculpated high officials in Washington of responsibility as follows: 7

1. Effective utilization of the military power of the Nation is essential to success in war and requires: First, the coordination of the foreign and military policies of the Nation; and, second, the coordination of the operations of the Army and Navy.

2. The Secretary of State fulfilled his obligations by

the War and Navy Departments in close touch with the international situation and fully advising them respecting the course and probable termination of negotiations with Japan.

3. The Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy fulfilled their obligations by conferring frequently with the Secretary of State and with each other and by keeping the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations informed of the course of the negotiations with Japan and the significant implications thereof.

4. The Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations fulfilled their obligations by consulting and cooperating with each other, and with their superiors, respecting the joint defense of the Hawaiian coastal frontier; and each knew of, and concurred in, the warnings and orders sent by the other to the responsible commanders with respect to such defense.

5. The Chief of Staff of the Army fulfilled his command responsibility by issuing a direct order in connection with his warning of probable hostilities, in the following words: "Prior to hostile Japanese action you are directed to undertake such reconnaissance and other measures as you deem necessary."

6. The Chief of Naval Operations fulfilled his command responsibility by issuing a warning and by giving a direct order to the commander in chief, Pacific Fleet, in the following words:

"This despatch is to be considered a war warning."

and

"Execute an appropriate defensive deployment preparatory to carrying out the tasks assigned."

The second part of the Conclusions placed responsibilities on General Short and Admiral Kimmel, the commanders at Hawaii, charged them with derelictions of duty and errors of judgment, and declared that their errors of judgment were "the effective causes for the success of the attack." These Conclusions were as follows:

7. The responsible commanders in the Hawaiian area, in fulfillment of their obligation so to do, prepared plans which,

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9. These commanders failed to confer with respect to the warnings and orders issued on and after November 27, and to adapt and use existing plans to meet the emergency.

10. The order for alert No. 1 of the Army command in Hawaii was not adequate to meet the emergency envisaged in the warning messages.

11. The state of readiness of the naval forces on the morning of December 7 was not such as was required to meet the emergency envisaged in the warning messages.

12. Had orders issued by the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations November 27, 1941, been complied with, the aircraft warning system of the Army should have been operating; the distant reconnaissance of the Navy, and the inshore air patrol of the Army, should have been maintained; the antiaircraft batteries of the Army and similar shore batteries of the Navy, as well as additional antiaircraft artillery located on vessels of the fleet in Pearl Harbor, should have been manned and supplied with ammunition; and a high state of readiness of aircraft should have been in effect. None of these conditions was in fact inaugurated or maintained for the reason that the responsible commanders failed to consult and cooperate as to necessary action based upon the warnings and to adopt measures enjoined by the orders given them by the chiefs of the Army and Navy commands in Washington.

13. There were deficiencies in personnel, weapons, equipment, and facilities to maintain all the defenses on a war footing for extended periods of time, but these deficiencies should not have affected the decision of the responsible commanders as to the state of readiness to be prescribed.

14. The warning message of December 7, intended to reach both commanders in the field at about 7 a.m. Hawaiian time, December 7, 1941, was but an added precaution, in view of the warnings and orders previously issued. If the message had reached its destination at the time intended, it would still have been too late to be of substantial use, in view of the fact that the commanders had failed to take measures and make dispositions prior to the time of its anticipated receipt which would have been effective to warn of the attack or to meet it. . . .

15. The failure of the commanding general, Hawaiian De-

and cooperate with respect to the meaning of the warnings received and the measures necessary to comply with the orders given them under date of November 27, 1941, resulted largely from a sense of security due to the opinion prevalent in diplomatic, military, and naval circles, and in the public press, that any immediate attack by Japan would be in the Far East. The existence of such a view, however prevalent, did not relieve the commanders of the responsibility for the security of the Pacific Fleet and our most important outpost.

17. In the light of the warnings and directions to take appropriate action, transmitted to both commanders between November 27 and December 7, and the obligation under the system of coordination then in effect for joint cooperative action on their part, it was a dereliction of duty on the part of each of them not to consult and confer with the other respecting the meaning and intent of the warnings, and the appropriate measures of defense required by the imminence of hostilities. The attitude of each, that he was not required to inform himself of, and his lack of interest in, the measures undertaken by the other to carry out the responsibility assigned to each other under the provisions of the plans then in effect, demonstrated on the part of each a lack of appreciation of the responsibilities vested in them and inherent in their positions as commander in chief, Pacific Fleet, and commanding general, Hawaiian Department.

18. The Japanese attack was a complete surprise to the commanders, and they failed to make suitable dispositions to meet such an attack. Each failed properly to evaluate the seriousness of the situation. These errors of judgment were the effective causes for the success of the attack.

The third group of the Conclusions presented in the Roberts Report (15, 19, 20, and 21) dealt with responsibilities or failures in Washington and the conduct of subordinate officers and enlisted men in Hawaii. These Conclusions read:

15. The failure of the officers in the War Department to observe that General Short, neither in his reply of November 27 to the Chief of Staff's message of that date, nor otherwise,

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to illegal methods against sabotage or espionage, and not to take measures which would alarm the civil population, and the failure to reply to his message of November 29 outlining in full all the actions he had taken against sabotage only, and referring to nothing else, tended to lead General Short to believe that what he had done met the requirements of the warnings and orders received by him. . . .

19. Causes contributory to the success of the Japanese attack

were:

Disregard of international law and custom relating to declaration of war by the Japanese and the adherence by the United States to such laws and customs.

Restrictions which prevented effective counterespionage.

Emphasis in the warning messages on the probability of aggressive Japanese action in the Far East, and on antisabotage measures. Failure of the War Department to reply to the message relating to the antisabotage measures instituted by the commanding general, Hawaiian Department.

Nonreceipt by the interested parties, prior to the attack, of the warning message of December 7, 1941.

20. When the attack developed on the morning of December 7, 1941, the officers and enlisted men of both services were present in sufficient number and were in fit condition to perform any duty. Except for a negligible number, the use of intoxicating liquor on the preceding evening did not affect their efficiency.

To the readers of headlines in the newspapers and casual listeners at radios, indeed to casual readers of the Roberts Report itself, the Conclusions released to the public probably meant what they appeared to mean, namely, that high officials in Washington, from Secretary Hull down to the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations had fulfilled their obligations; that General Short and Admiral Kimmel had been guilty of derelictions of duty; and that errors of judgment on their part "were the effective causes" of the catastrophe at Pearl Harbor.

OFFICIAL ARRAIGNMENT OF THE HAWAIIAN COMMANDERS

After the Report of the Commission on Pearl Harbor was completed President Roosevelt went over it with Justice Roberts, the chairman, and decided that it should be made public. But the action of releasing to the press this state paper so significant for the problem of how war came, the President as signed to his secretary, Stephen Early. After handing copies out to journalists on January 24, 1942, Mr. Early, according to the *New York Times* report, said that the President had spent two hours over it with Justice Roberts and had expressed "his gratitude for a most painstaking and thorough investigation."

Having thus indicated that the Report had been approved by President Roosevelt, Mr. Early clearly and yet carefully intimated that, owing to the gravity of the pronouncements on General Short and Admiral Kimmel, the two commanders would have to face military tribunals, for he declared that "further action was under study. Because of the 'dereliction of duty' charge, it is believed certain that Admiral Kimmel and General Short would be court-martialled." 8 The *New York Herald Tribune* account of this White House conference on the Roberts Report, while varying a little in details, was of the same tenor as the *Times* report.⁹

Secretary Early's comments to newspaper correspondents on the treatment to be accorded to the two commanders were somewhat cryptic. He did not say that the President had approved the indictment and would proceed with preparations to bring them to trial. But he did say that "further action was under study," and, without definitely committing the President, he conveyed the impression that General Short and Admiral Kimmel were to be court-martialled.

For a time, other comments in Washington lent support to the idea broached by Secretary Early at the White House conference on January 24. A United Press dispatch of that

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day stated that some congressional leaders demanded “summary treatment” for the commanders, and quoted Representative Dewey Short as saying: “It’s high time we were getting rid of those incompetents. . . . We’ve got a lot of gold braid ers around here who haven’t had a new idea in twenty years.

. . . They should be court-martialed!” Commenting on the Roberts Report the next day, Senator Alben Barkley was enthusiastic; he said that it was “a comprehensive and admirable view of the facts and the people are justified in believing that nothing will be kept from them.” The Senator added that suspicion should be ended “now that everybody knows what happened.”¹⁰

But neither the Roberts Report nor the idea that General Short and Admiral Kimmel were actually guilty as charged was approved wholesale in Congress. Senator Walsh declared that there were important facts with which the Report did not deal and that “the public will demand to be informed.”¹¹ Senator Gerald Nye uttered warnings against being too hasty and said: “Certainly, I would want an opportunity for these two men to be heard.” Senator LaFollette insisted that some of the blame lay right here in Washington, and several members of Congress asserted that “the War and Navy Departments were as much to blame” as General Short and Admiral Kimmel.¹²

Meanwhile criticism of the Roberts Report and its allocation of responsibility for the catastrophe at Pearl Harbor began to come from quarters highly favorable to the foreign policies and measures of President Roosevelt. In an editorial on January 26, 1942, the *New York Times* flatly stated: “However grave the responsibilities of each of these commanders may have been, the conclusions of the Roberts Commission seem too sweeping in exculpating their superiors in Washington from blame and in too easily finding that each of these ‘ful filled his obligations.’” On the same day, the *New York Her-*

aid Tribune, speaking editorially, objected to the complete exoneration of Washington and asserted: "The want of fore sight at Pearl Harbor was paralleled higher up." It was revealed that, while some men, including Andrew J. May, chairman of the House Committee on Military Affairs, were calling for quick and drastic action against General Short and Admiral Kimmel, the idea of exculpating superiors in Wash ington and penalizing the commanders was not being uni versally accepted; indeed, it was being challenged as untenable, with intimations of troubles ahead for the Roberts Report and its official sponsors.

On January 27, 1942, the *New York Times* carried a report from Washington that an inquiry on Hawaii was being urged in Congress by some members of both parties and that Republicans were "most vocal" in claiming that officials in Washington had been remiss in failing to make sure that the commanders were preparing for any eventuality. "A number of Democrats," the *Times* report added, "privately voiced similar criticism." Inquiries at the War and Navy Depart ments developed no information as to whether Secretary Stim son and Secretary Knox would act in the case of the court- martial mentioned at the White House three days previously.¹³ With a political storm of no small proportions brewing,¹⁴ journalists were insistent in their demands to know what was to be done with General Short and Admiral Kimmel. At a press conference on January 27, newspaper representatives asked Mr. Early whether any further White House action was

13. Representative Hamilton Fish, vigorous opponent of President Roosevelt and of involvement in war, declared that Secretary Knox should be removed from office: "In any other country the head of the Navy would have been removed for the disaster on December 7. Knox, who has been the leading war maker in the Cabinet and who was openly for war on two oceans and has assured the American people how invincible the American Navy was, ought to take the blame." *New York Times*, January 27, 1942.

14. While Anne O'Hare McCormick was sure that Secretary Hull and the State Department had done the right thing all along (*ibid.*, January 26) as the Roberts Report argued, Arthur Krock and Hanson Baldwin, in their columns, raised fundamental questions regarding the impartiality of the Roberts Report. *New York Times*, January 26, 1942.

pending in the case of the two commanders. Mr. Early did not think "it is done that way."

In the course of his exposition of the case that day, Secretary Early let it be known that the matter of further proceedings on the charges against General Short and Admiral Kimmel had been shifted from the President to Secretary Stimson and Secretary Knox (both of whom proved to be then uncommunicative on the subject). He said: "If the judge advocate general of either the Army or the Navy finds any charge in the Roberts Report, either the Secretary of War or Navy can order a court martial at the direction of the President. By direction of the President is just a form phrase. I don't know of any action here [the White House]. The Secretaries of War and Navy have copies of the Roberts Report. They administer the Army and Navy for the President."¹⁵ The next day at his press conference, President Roosevelt, in response to questions, stated that he had been studying the Roberts Report again and would have another conference with the Secretaries of War and the Navy. He added that he had talked with them previously.¹⁶

Efforts of Republicans in Congress, with some aid from Democrats, to force a new investigation of Pearl Harbor immediately came to an end, temporarily, on January 29, 1942, when the Committee on Naval Affairs of the House of Representatives by a vote of fourteen to six defeated a resolution for an inquiry of some kind. The Republican sponsor of the proposal, Representative Maas, expressed regret over the defeat and declared: "The Roberts Report settled nothing fundamental. It fixed the local blame, but not the cause of the Pearl Harbor disaster. I had hoped that the committee would make a study to find the underlying factors in our politics, both military and foreign. Obviously, simply the removal of two individuals who were running out a system does not cover the

15. *New York Times*, January 27, 1942.

16. *Ibid.*, January 28, 1942.

17. *New York Herald Tribune*, January 30, 1942.

meted out to the movement for a congressional investigation, the *New York Times* stated that the vote was on party lines, and said that it was indicated elsewhere at the Capitol that the Administration had intervened to head off the inquiry.¹⁸

By the first of February it was patent to the most persistent journalists that there was to be no further official inquiry into the Pearl Harbor disaster and that the White House, the War Department, and the Navy Department did not intend to give out any specific information respecting courts-martial for General Short and Admiral Kimmel until the President and the two Secretaries were ready to announce their decision in the case. On February 8, 1942, the *New York Times* reported that the two commanders had asked for retirement, to which they were entitled by virtue of their years of service. The dispatch stated that the decision as to the acceptance of their applications was represented as resting entirely with the President as Commander in Chief; and that Army and Navy officers (unnamed) had "pointed out that acceptances of the applications for retirement would not preclude of itself the possibility of future court-martial proceedings." On this report Senator Reynolds, chairman of the Military Affairs Committee of the Senate commented: "If I were in their places, I would not want to retire under a cloud without a chance to explain my side; I would ask for a court-martial." ¹⁸ For many days the affair of the two commanders dragged on inconclusively.

Suddenly on February 28, 1942, Secretary Stimson and Secretary Knox issued statements to the press accepting the retirement of General Short and Admiral Kimmel on identical conditions; and at the same time they announced that the preparation of charges for trials on dereliction of duty by courts-martial had been ordered—trials not to be held until such time as the public interest and safety would permit. According to the *New York Times*, the War and Navy Departments stated that the commanders "are

martial at such time 'as the public interest and safety' permits"; 20 but the official text of each release contained no *guarantee* of trial, for it read as follows:

The Secretary of War announced today the acceptance effective February 28, 1942, of the application for retirement of General Walter C. Short, "without condonation of any offense or prejudice to any future disciplinary action."

The Secretary of War announced at the same time that, based on the findings of the report of the Roberts' Commission, he had directed the preparation of charges for the trial by court-martial of General Short, alleging dereliction of duty. The Secretary of War made it clear, however, that the trial upon these charges would not be held until such time as the public interest and safety would permit.

The release given to the press by Secretary Knox announced the retirement of Admiral Kimmel, effective March 1, 1942, in the same terms that Secretary Stimson applied to the case of General Short.

Thus, after five weeks of unexplained delay, from January 24 to February 28, 1942, the War Department and the Navy Department, not the President, retired the commanders under imputations of guilt; and so things stood officially, as far as the American people knew, for two years and nine months—until December 1, 1944.²¹ According to appearances the Report of the President's Commission on Pearl Harbor was valid; Secretary Hull, Secretary Stimson, Secretary Knox, General Marshall, Admiral Stark, and, by implication, President Roosevelt were free from responsibility; but General Short and Admiral Kimmel were guilty of committing derelictions of duty and errors of judgment which were the effective causes of the success of the Japanese attack. By innuendo, if not definite intimation, from the White House as of January 24, 1942, they were guilty and awaiting trials by courts-martial, but from that source had come no guarantee that they would in fact ever be brought to trial and given a chance, at least, to be

20. *Ibid.*, March 1, 1942. (Italics supplied.)

heard. By innuendo, if not by definite intimation, from Secretary Stimson and Secretary Knox, the two commanders were to expect trials by courts-martial when the public interest and safety would permit; but from those sources had come no guarantee that the alleged offenders would ever be granted such a hearing of their cause.

Judging by the appearances reflected in official communications to the public the record was clear. General Short and Admiral Kimmel had been derelict in the discharge of their duties at Pearl Harbor and incompetent besides. Their blunders, willful and witless, had been the effective causes of the American catastrophe at Pearl Harbor, which crippled the armed forces of the nation for the prosecution of the war and meant prolonging indefinitely the bloody and costly struggle to overcome the enemy. After the disaster they had been relieved of their commands; and then, with guilt hanging over their heads, they had taken advantage of the law and their years of service to ask for retirement on pension. President Roosevelt, Secretary Stimson, and Secretary Knox had granted their application, on condition that none of their offenses were to be condoned and that at the proper time they might face trial by courts-martial on charges alleging derelictions of duty. Thus the two commanders, publicly branded as unfaithful to duty and pilloried before the nation, were to await their doom; the justice of the Republic was to be vindicated—when, in the opinion of the President of the United States, the public interest and safety would permit. Such were the appearances created by Executive announcements.

A SEMIOFFICIAL CONFIRMATION OF THE OFFICIAL
THESIS ON PEARL HARBOR

In the summer of 1942, the thesis which cleared the Roosevelt Administration of all responsibility for Pearl Harbor was confirmed by two eminent journalists at the White House and State Department, Forrest Davis and Ernest K. Lindbergh, in *How War Came: An American White Paper*.

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sibility, done in the mode of communication to the people often employed by the Roosevelt Administration.²² In this work, the President and the Secretary of State were represented (pp. 315 f.) as having fulfilled their obligations to the uttermost:

. . . The danger that the Japanese would attack anywhere, or several places simultaneously, was not overlooked. The most remote possibilities, as well as the probabilities, had been weighed again and again by the responsible officials in Washington. The President and Secretary Hull had kept the Army and Navy fully informed of the gravity of the trend of events. Both had every reason to believe that our armed forces in the Pacific were on the alert and ready, in so far as their strength permitted, to meet any contingency. The defenses of the Philippines were known to be weak—although it was not anticipated that the Japanese would succeed in destroying two thirds of our air forces there on the ground in one afternoon, hours after the assault on Oahu. In the Hawaiian Islands, our naval and air and ground forces were ample to throw back any attack which the Japanese could launch.

Although at other points in their work Davis and Lindley dismissed the Roberts Report as giving the superficial reasons for the disaster at Pearl Harbor and placed the real blame on the smug and ignorant Americans—especially the isolationists, in this passage, they accepted the Report's verdict on the Administration as in effect valid. The danger that the Japanese would attack *anywhere* had not been overlooked. The President and Secretary Hull had kept the Army and Navy ²³

22. For the nature of the Davis and Lindley exploit, see Beard, *op. cit.*, pp. 25 ff.

23. From a careful study of the use of the words "the Army and the Navy," as employed in congressional hearings and debates, official documents, news papers, and popular writings, I find great discrepancies in practice. The Secretaries of War and the Navy are sometimes included and sometimes excluded. Often the Army and the Navy are treated as if they were autonomous bodies that stand outside or over against the civilian officials, although the position of the President as Commander in Chief is recognized and usually vaguely defined. Is the Commander in Chief, by virtue of his office, to be regarded as belonging to the

Jully informed of the gravity of the trend of events. They had reason to believe that American armed forces in the Pacific were ready and alert. Presumably owing to the energy and competence of the Administration, our naval and air and ground forces were ample to throw back any attack the Japa nese could launch at the Hawaiian Islands. In short, as wise and farseeing statesmen, President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull had fulfilled all their obligations in safeguarding the interests of the smug and ignorant nation. For what had gone wrong, the people, especially the isolationists and the Hawaiian com manders,

PART II
UNVEILING REALITIES

CHAPTER IX

The Beginning of

ACCORDING to appearances reflected in official statements, the situation on the eve of the Japanese attack December 7, 1941, seemed to be about as described by President Roosevelt in his message of the next day, his of December 9, and his message to Congress on December 15. The United States was then "at peace with that nation," Japan; and "at the solicitation of Japan" the United States "was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific." At the very end, the President was determined, as he said, "to exhaust every conceivable effort for peace," in addressing a personal message to the Emperor of Japan.

Meanwhile, according to the official explanation, Japan had been deliberately planning war and had "deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace." Even the Japanese reply to Secretary Hull's memorandum of November 26, delivered by the Japanese Ambassador and special envoy about two o'clock on December 7, "contained no hint or threat of war or armed attack." In carrying out this program of premeditated deceit, the President explained, the Japanese undertook "a surprise offensive," "treacherously violated the long standing peace between us," and commenced to bomb Oahu an hour before the Japanese representatives in Washington handed to Secretary Hull their document, "crowded with infamous falsehoods and distortions," as the Secretary characterized it. Such, the President declared, was "the treachery committed by the military dictators of Japan, under the very shadow of the flag of peace borne by their special envoys in our midst." In this record of Japanese

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or a thousand years hence, will be able to suppress a sense of indignation and horror” at the treachery displayed by Japanese militarists.

Not long after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor the publication of official documents and statements on the course of affairs during the previous months and years enlarged the available information respecting the negotiations and activities that eventuated in the climax at Hawaii. As months and years passed, more and more secret information relative to the coming of war was brought to light in varying circumstances. At last in 1945-46, a Joint Committee of Congress investigated the complicated moves prior to Pearl Harbor, and produced from the records of the United States Government new evidence bearing on the official thesis respecting the conduct of foreign affairs in 1941 and the backgrounds of the war.¹

Indeed, late in the day of December 7, 1941, as if to show how in conversations looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific, he had stood by American principles, Secretary Hull released to the public

1. As soon as I heard, in the afternoon of December 7, 1941, the news of the American catastrophe at Pearl Harbor, I was convinced that here was no mere accident or incident of war but a culmination in more than a hundred years of American diplomatic negotiations and activities in respect of the Far East, and the opening of a new and dangerous age for the Republic. Studies of diplomatic history, started under the guidance of that great master, Professor John Bassett Moore, at the beginning of the century, and continued during the intervening years, led me to believe that in time to come far more would be known about the foreign policies and the conduct of foreign affairs which eventuated in the attack at Pearl Harbor. What had happened as a result of opening up diplomatic archives after World War I seemed to forecast probable lines of historical investigation during the next twenty-five or fifty years. Consequently, I then began the collection of materials on events relative to the attack on Pearl Harbor, not merely as a momentous occurrence in history, but as presenting to mankind perhaps a revolutionary phase of Great History. In this and succeeding chapters I have employed these materials and sought to treat them as summarily as the multitudinous facts of the record will permit. This, as students of general history know, is only a part of the history of war origins; for secret documents from the archives of Europe and Asia, when published, will provide materials for recasting the official views of war origins in Europe and Asia from 1938 to 1941, inclusive; for example, the documents revealing the real nature of the Hitler-Stalin pact of August, 1939, and of Stalin's subsequent demands on Hitler for a larger share of the spoils wrung from other countries in their joint war of aggression.

hitherto held confidential.² Now for the first time the American people had available the exact language of the “principles” that President Roosevelt had firmly espoused in the last fateful days. Then, the question could be properly asked: Is this the foreign policy, the official program of the United States for the Far East, in support of which Americans are to pour out blood and treasure? In publishing the document Secretary Hull appeared to be giving an affirmative answer.

American citizens who had any knowledge of American diplomatic history and foreign affairs worthy of mention could readily detect the significance of the memorandum as soon as it was published. Its historical insignia, despite the phraseology of the new “international morality,” stood out starkly in the text—as starkly as if Secretary Stimson had shared in writing it.³ First of all, it revealed that President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull had categorically rejected a Japanese proposal in November for a *modus vivendi*—a truce which might have been used to postpone the war until American forces were better prepared to fight, and, perhaps, to avoid a two-front war entirely. The memorandum made it patent that they had not chosen to follow the methods long recognized in diplomacy as calculated to arrive at a *modus vivendi*; in other words, they had not limited the issues to primary and essential terms, which, if rejected by Japan, would have given them a pointed *casus belli* to be presented to Congress and the country. In any case, in deciding upon the substance of the memorandum they had refrained from directing the main emphasis to the recent southward movements of Japanese troops which menaced the Philippines, as well as British and Dutch possessions in that area.

At no time in the history of American diplomatic relations with the Orient, if published records are to be trusted, had the Government of the United States proposed to Japan such a

2. Text in Funk, *Roosevelt's Foreign Policy, 1933-1941*, pp. 539 ff. When the document was published it could be seen that the memorandum was the work of

sweeping withdrawal from China under a veiled threat of war and under the pressure of economic sanctions likely to lead to war.⁴ Not even the most brazen imperialist under Republican auspices had even ventured to apply this doctrine officially in the conduct of relations with Japan. Moreover there was nothing in platforms of the American political parties,— Democratic or Republican, or in the popular decisions at the polls, between 1900 and November 26, 1941, which gave any color of approbation to the inference or presumption that the American people generally should or would support a war against Japan merely for the purpose of enforcing in the Far East the sweeping proposals of Secretary Hull's memorandum.

Americans with long memories who could place in historical context and perspective the flaming headlines and the documents of the day could recall the solemn asseverations of the Democratic party respecting the imperialist program of the Republicans in 1900:

We hold that the Constitution follows the flag and denounce the doctrine that an Executive or Congress, deriving their existence and their powers from the Constitution, can exercise lawful authority beyond it, or in violation of it. We assert that no nation can long endure half republic and half empire, and we warn the American people that imperialism abroad will lead quickly and

4. Such a threat backed by the imposition of economic sanctions had been urged by Henry L. Stimson, as Secretary of State under President Hoover, with a view to breaking Japan's hold on Manchuria in 1931; but President Hoover rejected both economic sanctions and the very idea of a war for any such purpose in Asia. On the other hand, in 1933, President Roosevelt had privately come to an agreement with Mr. Stimson on what was known as "the Stimson doctrine"; in June, 1940, he had made Mr. Stimson, then seventy-four years old, his Secretary of War; and he had begun in July, 1940, to apply economic embargoes to Japan. The following partial list of President Roosevelt's measures in this respect is indicative: July 26, 1939, denunciation of the Japanese trade treaty of 1911, to go into effect at the end of six months, freeing the Administration for unilateral restrictions on commerce between the United States and Japan. January 26, 1940, United States-Japan trade treaty at an end. March 7, 1940, United States loan of \$20,000,000 to China authorized. July 5, 1940, embargo on export of numerous strategic products except under official license. September 25, 1940, additional loan of \$25,000,000 to China. September 26, 1940, embargo on shipment of iron scrap outside this hemisphere, except to Great Britain. July 25, 1941, Japanese assets in the United States frozen.

inevitably to despotism at home . . . we are not willing to surrender our civilization, or to convert the Republic into an empire. . . . The greedy commercialism which dictated the Philippine policy of the Republican administration attempts to justify it with the plea that it will pay, but even this sordid and unworthy plea fails when brought to the test of facts. . . . We are in favor of extending the Republic's influence among the nations, but believe that influence should be extended not by force and violence, but through the persuasive power of a high and honorable example. The importance of other questions now pending before the American people is in nowise diminished . . . ; but the burning issue of imperialism, growing out of the Spanish war, involves the very existence of the Republic and the destruction of our free institutions. . . . We oppose militarism. It means conquest abroad and intimidation and oppression at home. It means the strong arm which has ever been fatal to free institutions. It is what millions of our citizens have fled from in Europe. It will impose upon our peace-loving people a large standing army, an unnecessary burden of taxation, and would be a constant menace to their liberties.

. . . The Republic has no place for a vast military establishment, a sure forerunner of compulsory military service and conscription. . . . We denounce it as un-American, undemocratic, and un-republican and as a subversion of the ancient and fixed principles of a free people.

Nor by American citizens of long memories who read the published memorandum of November 26, 1941, could it be forgotten that some Republican statesmen of distant days had joined the Democrats in warning the Republic of dangers that lurked in the imperialist adventure in the Orient; Senator George F. Hoar, for example. Speaking in the Senate on the annexation of Hawaii in 1898, Senator Hoar said:

If this be the first step in the acquisition of dominion over barbarous archipelagoes in distant seas; if we are to enter into competition with the great powers of Europe in the plundering of China, in the division of Africa; if we are to

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pendence is a stranger; or, worse still, if we are to govern subjects and vassal States, trampling as we do it on our own great Charter which recognizes alike the liberty and the dignity of individual manhood, then let us resist this thing in the beginning, and let us resist it to the death.⁵

Against a vast historical background of the American past, the memorandum which Secretary Hull, with the approval of President Roosevelt, handed to Japan on November 26, 1941, became easily identifiable. Instead of limiting it to the protection of the Philippine Islands, for which the United States still had the obligation assumed after the Spanish War, or even to the minimum terms necessary to protect the British and Dutch imperial possessions against Japanese aggression, the President and the Secretary had presented to Japan what amounted to the maximum terms of an American policy for the whole Orient. They called upon Japan to withdraw "all military, naval, air and police forces from China and Indochina"; to recognize only the Chungking Government; to make additional concessions of a similar nature; to observe in China the political and economic practices once covered by the apparently righteous phrase, the Open Door—the old Republican formula for American intervention in China;⁶ and

5. G. F. Hoar, *Autobiography of Seventy Years* (Scribner, 1903), II, 310f.

6. This old phrase used by Republicans to justify the intervention of the Government of the United States in Oriental affairs on behalf of economic interests was never more than a kind of shibboleth. Various powers, including Japan, had agreed to observe or respect it, but none of them, not even the United States, had undertaken to guarantee it by political and military action. That profound student of American policy in the Far East, Tyler Dennett, writing in 1922, said of it (as of 1899): "The United States merely demanded an open door for trade in that part of China in which American merchants were already interested, viz., the area westward from Kwangtung on the South to Manchuria on the North. . . . And as for those parts of the traditional Chinese Empire in the extreme South where France had already carved out an empire, or along the Amur where Russia had begun the partition of China in 1860, the United States never murmured a protest. . . . It seems clear that the United States would not have taken up arms either to enforce assent to the open door policy, or to prevent the partition of the Empire. On the other hand, had the dismemberment of China been started, there would have been a very strong sentiment in the United States against remaining aloof from the division of the spoils." *Americans in Eastern Asia* (Macmillan, 1922), 120-121.

henceforth to abide by Secretary Hull's program of international morality.

Such was the memorandum of November 26, 1941, given to the public shortly after the Japanese attack, December 7.⁷ As then applied to Japan, it represented also, in sum and substance, an expansion of the Stimson doctrine⁸ to cover all China, Indo-China, and indeed almost any part of the Orient—the very doctrine which ten years previously President Hoover, despite the urging of his Secretary of State, Henry

L. Stimson, had firmly refused to support by economic sanctions and war in respect of Manchuria. In 1931 President Hoover had solemnly informed his Cabinet, in a statement amazingly prophetic, that, deplorable as they were, the actions of Japan in Manchuria, “do not imperil the freedom of the American people, the economic or moral future of our people. I do not propose ever to sacrifice American life for any thing short of this. If that were not enough reason, to go to war means a long struggle at a time when civilization is already weak enough. To win such a war is not solely a naval operation. We must arm and train Chinese. We would find our selves involved in China in a fashion that would excite the suspicions of the whole world.” President Hoover fully approved the idea that the United States should cooperate with the rest of the world and the League of Nations in the field of moral pressures. “But,” he added, “that is the limit. We will not go along on war or any of the sanctions either economic or military for those are the roads to war.”⁹

Read in the light of such history, the memorandum of November 26, 1941, made it plain that President Roosevelt had

7. For a fuller analysis of the memorandum and its significance, see below, Chap. XVII. As if aware that this memorandum and President Roosevelt's relation to it were crucial to the coming of the war, Alden Hatch in his eulogy of President Roosevelt says that the President was “uncertain” whether he had “done the right thing in allowing Secretary Hull to present” it to Japan, and that